TERROR TALES

MARCH
1971
50¢

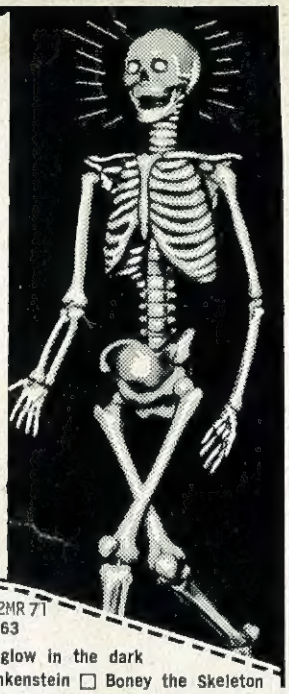
FROM THE LOWER DEPTHS CRAWLED THE MONSTROUS

CREATURE OF EVIL

HE ROSE FROM THE GRAVE AND BECAME

THE CORPSE THEY COULDN'T BURY

MONSTER S-I-Z-E MONSTERS



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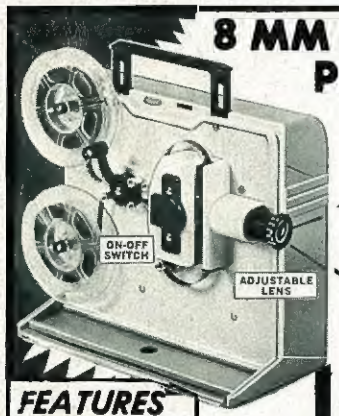

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TERROR TALES

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CARL BURGOS, Editor. IRVING FASS, Art Director
EZRA JACKSON, Art Editor

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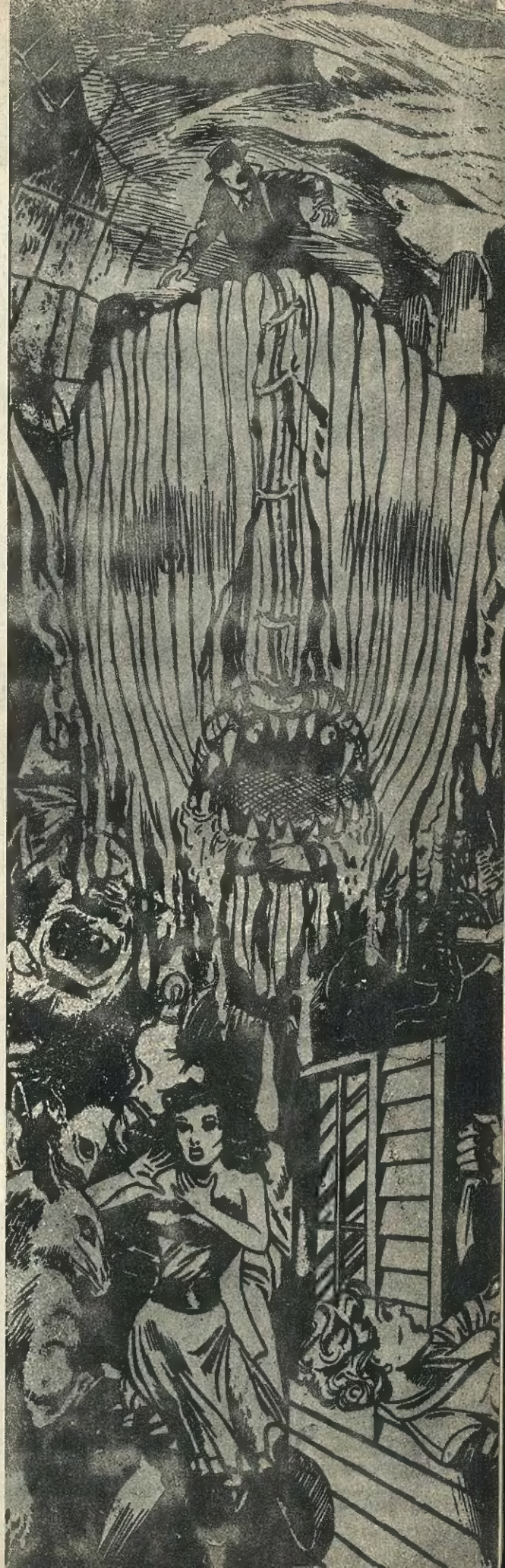
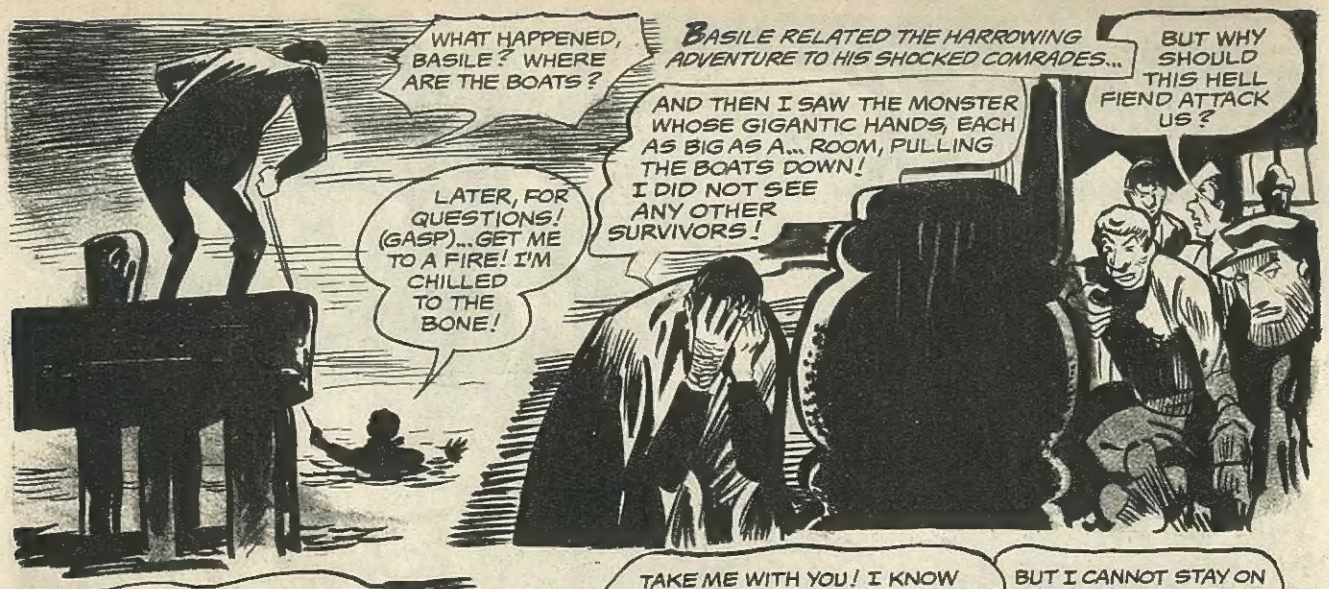


CREATURE OF EVIL!
THERE ARE THINGS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF SCIENCE! NO MAN KNOWS WHAT LEVIATHAN CREATURES HAUNT THE SEAS AT THEIR MURKY DEPTHS, SO THAT THE TALES TOLD BY ANCIENT MARINERS OF SEA DEVILS MAY BE TRUE! BUT THERE WERE SKEPTICS...
GO AHEAD, LAUGH, BUT FERNANDE TELLS YOU THERE ARE TERRORS IN THE SEA THAT CAN FREEZE YOUR BLOOD!
WHERE ARE THESE SEA MONSTERS YOU TALK ABOUT? BAH, THEY EXIST ONLY IN YOUR MIND!
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IN SEA MONSTERS, BUT LISTEN-- THE MOON HAS BLOOD ON IT TONIGHT! IT IS AN EVIL OMEN!
YOU SPEAK LIKE AN OLD WOMAN, FERNANDE! TOMORROW WILL BE PERFECT FOR FISHING!

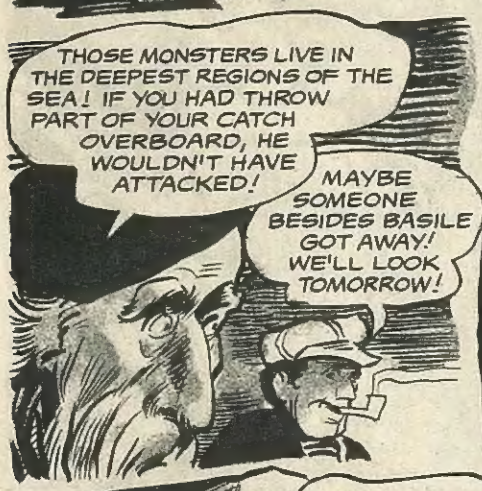
LIKE FERNANDE SAID, THE MOON IS SURROUNDED BY A BLOODY HALO! PERHAPS WE SHOULD LISTEN TO THE OLD ONE!
I TELL YOU, THE OLDER HE GETS, THE CRAZIER HE BECOMES!
DAWN CAME TO JEAN DES PRES, BRING A PERFECT DAY FOR FISHING--
WHAT A DAY! WE'LL COME HOME WITH A PRIZE CATCH! UP WITH THE ANCHOR, JACQUES!
HA, HA! DID YOU SEE FERNANDE AT THE WARF, WARNING US AGAIN!
ALL DAY THE FISH RAN HEAVY! THE NETS WERE EMPTIED AGAIN AND AGAIN...
THIS IS OUR LIMIT! LETS HEAD FOR HOME!
RIGHT! OURS IS THE LAST TO LEAVE THE BANKS!
RAGING FOR HOME THE HEAVILY LADEN BOAT REACHED THE SHOAL INLET...
WAIT TILL FERNANDE SEES THIS CATCH! HIS EYES WILL POP!
HA, HA! THE MOON WAS RED! LET IT BE RED EVERY NIGHT IF THIS IS THE RESULT!
SUDDENLY...
WHAT'S THAT? WE'VE STOPPED
LOOK!! THAT GIANT HAND! IT'S...IT'S HOLDING US BACK!
SACRÊ BLEU! WHAT IS THAT HORRIBLE CREATURE?
AAAAIIII!
THE MONSTER IS DRAGGING US DOWN!

ON THE WHARF, THE FISHERMAN KEPT AN ALL NIGHT VIGIL FOR THE MISSING BOAT...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, FERNANDE! I SAW JACQUES' BOAT! WE PASSED IT COMING IN! THE SEA WAS PERFECTLY CALM!
THERE ARE MANY THINGS IN THE SEA YOU HAVE NEVER DREAMED OF BASILE!
POOR JACQUES! HIS BOAT MUCH HAVE STRUCK A REEF IN THE INLET, FERNANDE?
JACQUES COULD NAVIGATE THIS INLET BLINDFOLDED! AND HOW IS IT THERE ARE NO BODIES?
FROM MORNING TILL EARLY EVENING A SEARCH PARTY SCOURED THE INLET...
NOT A TRACE! NOT EVEN A PIECE OF SAIL CLOTH! THEY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SWALLOWED UP!
IT'S USELESS TO SEARCH FURTHER!
YOU ARE JUST TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US, OLD FOOL! TOMORROW WE GO TO FISH!
LOOK, AGAIN THE MOON IS RED! YOU HAD BETTER STAY ON LAND TOMORROW! BUT IF YOU INSIST ON FISHING, THROW PART OF YOUR CATCH BACK INTO THE SEA!
FERNANDE'S ADVICE WENT UNHEEDED...
IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO SEND THE BOATS OUT IN PAIRS, HENRI! THIS WAY ONE CAN HELP THE OTHER OUT!
WE HAD A RECORD DAY, BASILE! WE SHOULD THROW PART OF THE CATCH BACK!
FERNANDE SHOULD BE IN THE MAD-HOUSE! I WON'T THROW A FISH BACK!
JUST AS THEY REACHED THE ROCK-LINED INLET...

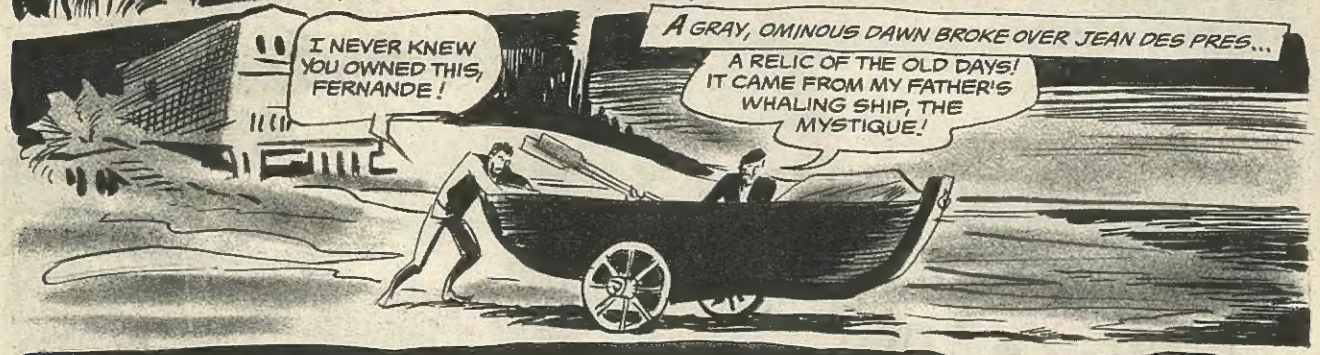
THIS IS HOW JACQUES AND HIS MEN DISAPPEARED! WHAT CAN WE DO AGAINST THIS DEVIL BEAST?
AAY!!
FIGHT! GRAB A GAFF HOOK! TRY TO SMASH HIS HEAD!
UNGH! HIS HEAD IS SOLID AS A ROCK!
AGAIN! NAME OF A DEVIL! HIT HIM AGAIN. DON'T STOP OR WE ARE LOST!
ARRooow
FLUNG FAR FROM THE SPLINTERED BOATS, BASILE, STILL PETRIFIED WITH FRIGHT, WITNESSED A TERRIFYING SIGHT...
WHAT A HELLISH CREATURE! I MUST GET AWAY BEFORE HE DESTROYS ME, TOO!
ARRR
Roo
SWIMMING LIKE ONE POSSESSED, BASILE NEARED THE WHARF...
MY ARMS ARE LIKE...(GASP)... LEAD! BUT I'M SAFE--SAFE FROM THAT SEA HORROR!


WHAT HAPPENED, BASILE? WHERE ARE THE BOATS?
LATER, FOR QUESTIONS! (GASP)...GET ME TO A FIRE! I'M CHILLED TO THE BONE!

BASILE RELATED THE HARROWING ADVENTURE TO HIS SHOCKED COMRADES...
AND THEN I SAW THE MONSTER WHOSE GIGANTIC HANDS, EACH AS BIG AS A... ROOM, PULLING THE BOATS DOWN! I DID NOT SEE ANY OTHER SURVIVORS!
BUT WHY SHOULD THIS HELL FIEND ATTACK US?


THOSE MONSTERS LIVE IN THE DEEPEST REGIONS OF THE SEA! IF YOU HAD THROW PART OF YOUR CATCH OVERBOARD, HE WOULDN'T HAVE ATTACKED!
MAYBE SOMEONE BESIDES BASILE GOT AWAY! WE'LL LOOK TOMORROW!

TAKE ME WITH YOU! I KNOW WHERE THE MONSTER ATTACKED! I CAN LEAD YOU THERE!
NO, BASILE! WE KNOW YOU ARE BRAVE, BUT YOU WERE MARKED AS DOOMED! WE CANNOT RISK TAKING YOU ALONG!
BUT I CANNOT STAY ON LAND WHILE YOU RISK YOUR LIVES!
I HAVE A LONGBOAT! YOU AND I SHALL GO TOGETHER!


I NEVER KNEW YOU OWNED THIS, FERNANDE!
A GRAY, OMINOUS DAWN BROKE OVER JEAN DES PRES...
A RELIC OF THE OLD DAYS! IT CAME FROM MY FATHER'S WHALING SHIP, THE MYSTIQUE!

SEE, WE DO NOT GO UNARMED! EVERYTHING IS OILED AND SHIPSHAPE!
A HARPOON GUN! I'VE FIRED ONE BEFORE! NOW I WOULD LIKE TO MEET THIS SEA MONSTER!

THE SEARCH CONTINUED FOR HOURS...
AYE, BASILE, AND I SEE THE REST OF THE BOATS TURNING BACK I CAN FEEL A SQUALL RISING!
IT LOOKS LIKE THE MONSTER DIDN'T SPARE ONE OF THEM!
HAD ENOUGH, BASILE? THE BOAT IS HARD TO HANDLE!
FERNANDE! WAIT! LOOK! A HAND COMING OUT OF THE WATER!
HE'S COMING TOWARD US! QUICK, BASILE FIRE!
I WANT THIS HARPOON TO STRIKE HIS BRAIN! HE'S COMING INTO MY SIGHTS!
NOW!
BLAM
A BORN HARPOONER! RIGHT THROUGH THE HEAD!
THIS AVENGES THE DEATHS OF MY SHIPMATES! NEVER AGAIN SHALL WE BE PLAGUED WITH MONSTERS AT JEAN DES PRES!
BUT AS THEY WATCHED THE SINKING MONSTER, A NEW UNEXPECTED HORROR ROSE OFF THEIR BOW!
I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVE THAT SUCH CREATURES EXIST!
BRRRR, I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! LET'S GET BACK! THE SQUALL IS BREAKING OVER US!
AAAAAP
LOOK OUT! IT'S ANOTHER, SEEKING REVENGE!

EEEAARR
STAY BACK, YOU WATERY HELL-FIEND! BACK I SAY!
AFTER CRUSHING THE LIFE OUT OF BASILE, THE CREATURE SHIFTED HIS ATTENTION--
YOU WON'T TAKE ME AS BASILE! FEEL THIS AXE, MONSTER!
JOIN YOUR COMRADE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!
ARRRO
FERNANDE REMEMBERED NO MORE! THE MERCIFUL SQUALL DROVE HIS BOAT TO LAND...
TWO OF THEM! WE KILLED TWO OF THEM, BUT BASILE WAS CAUGHT! SEE, I HAVE PROOF...
HA HA HA
HE'S HYSTERICAL! GET HIM TO THE BISTRO, QUICKLY!
NOW YOU'LL BELIEVE THERE ARE SEA MONSTERS! I CHOPPED OFF A FINGER BEFORE I KILLED IT... LOOK!
FERNANDE IS STARK RAVING MAD! IT'S JUST PART OF A STRANGE FISH HE CAUGHT!
IF YOU'RE EVER IN JEAN DES PRES, DROP IN TO SEE OLD FERNANDE! HE'LL TELL YOU THE STORY WORD FOR WORD, AND SHOW YOU THE MONSTER'S FINGER!
the End

THE CORPSE THEY COULDN'T BURY

LEAVE ME ALONE... YOU'RE DEAD... DO YOU HEAR ME... DEAD!

HENRI MARLEAU AND GEORGE RICCO GRADUATED FROM THE SAME MUSIC CONSERVATORY WITH HIGH HONORS... LATER AT A RECORDING STUDIO...

YOU'VE BOTH AUDITIONED WELL, GENTLEMEN... AND WE'VE CHOSEN YOU, RICCO! NOTHING AGAINST YOU, OF COURSE, MARLEAU!

WABH

THROUGH THE YEARS THEIR PATHS CONSTANTLY CROSS...

YOU ARE BOTH GOOD! BUT YOU, RICCO ARE SUPERB! YOU WILL BE MY SOLOIST!

THE FOOLS! THEY APPLAUD RICCO WHILE I LIVE ON CRUMBS!

BRAVO BRAVO

YEARS PASS AND THE FRUSTRATED HENRI MARLEAU BROODS IN HIS SQUALID ROOM...
I AM THE GREATEST VIRTUOSO IN THE WORLD AND RICCO IS JUST A BUM VIOLINIST!
LATER!
I AM THE MASTER AND HE PLAYS INSIDE FOR THOUSANDS WHILE I EARN PENNIES ON THIS STREET CORNER!
THE GREAT MASTER
GEORGE RICCO
AS THE AUDIENCE LEAVES...
RICCO IS GREAT!
LOOK AT THIS POOR BEGGAR! GIVE HIM A COIN, DEAR!
POOR BEGGAR, AM I? FOR THIS RICCO MUST PAY WITH HIS LIFE!
AFTER THE CROWD HAS DEPARTED, AN EMBITTERED AND CRAZY MARLEAU AWAITS THE UNSUSPECTING RICCO!
GEORGE RICCO
THE WORLD'S GREATEST
VIOLINIST
MARLEAU WHA...
THE HANDS OF A TRUE ARTIST ARE VERSATILE, RICCO! HA-HA!
ARGGHHH!

NOW TO BURY THE BODY WHERE IT WILL NEVER BE FOUND! I'LL DRIVE YOU THERE RICCO IN YOUR OWN CAR!
THE MURDERER DRIVES HIS VICTIM TO A DESOLATE AREA...
GOODBYE, RICCO! YOU'VE PLAYED YOUR LAST PERFORMANCE!
MARLEAU STARTS BACK TO THE CITY! THEN...
HA-HA! HE'LL TORMENT ME NO MORE! WHA--SACRE BLEU! HIS VIOLIN! I MUST GO BACK!!
BURN! HA-HA! BURN!
YOUR IDIOTIC VIOLIN SHALL FOLLOW YOU, RICCO... SO THAT YOU MAY PLAY WHEREVER YOU ARE! HA! HA! HA!
CRACK!

THE NEXT EVENING AS A VAST AUDIENCE WAITS FOR RICCO, MARLEAU IN A RENTED TUX PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE MANAGER WHO GRATEFULLY ALLOWS HIM TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ABSENT RICCO!
MY CHANCE AT LAST! NOW TO SHOW THESE IDIOTS WHAT TRUE GENIUS SOUNDS LIKE!
THE CRAZED MUSICIAN OUTDOES HIMSELF...
MAGNIFICENT! I HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW MASTER!
ENCORE, MARLEAU!
AT LAST THEY RECOGNIZE MY TALENT! MY DAYS OF PRIVATION ARE OVER!
YOUR AUTOGRAPH, MR. MARLEAU!
A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF RECITALS, CONCERTS AND RECORDING DATES FOLLOW...
HE'S ONE OF THE GREATES GENIUSES OF THE DAY!
GREAT, MARLEAU! GREAT! THIS RECORD OUGHT TO SELL A MILLION COPIES!
AS THE WORLD APPLAUDS THE NEWLY DISCOVERED GENIUS MARLEAU IS STARTLED BY AN UNEXPECTED AND UNINVITED GUEST AT AN EXCLUSIVE RECITAL...
WHAA-- NO! NO! IT CANNOT BE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MARLEAU?
NOOO...
HE MUST BE GOING MAD!

DAYS PASS AND MARLEAU TRIES TO DISMISS THE GRUESOME EPISODE FROM HIS MIND!
I MUST HAVE IMAGINED IT! I WAS TIRED, OVERWORKED! THAT'S ALL IT WAS...
RICCO!
YES, HENRI! EXPECTING ME?
KEEP AWAY! YOU'RE DEAD! I KILLED YOU!
RUNNING AWAY WON'T HELP YOU, HENRI! HA!HA!
LATER THAT WEEK...
AUTOGRAPH, MR. MARLEAU?
OF COURSE!
BUT THE GRUESOME VISION CONTINUED TO PLAGUE THE CRAZED VIOLINIST...
NO... GO AWAY! YOU'RE DEAD, I SAY...
WHAT?
KEEP AWAY...!
THE POOR MAN MUST BE INSANE!
THESE NUTTY GENIUSES!
ONE EVENING AT A PRIVATE RECITAL IN HIS OWN LAVISH APARTMENT...
THEY SAY HE'S BEEN ACTING ECCENTRICALLY BUT HE STILL PLAYS BEAUTIFULLY!
THE MASTER!

AIEEE!
MY WORD! YOU'D THINK HE'D SEEN SOMETHING!
RAVING HYSTERICALLY, THE HORROR-STRICKEN MARLEAU STAGGERS FROM THE ROOM TOWARD HIS TERRACE, FORTY FLOORS ABOVE THE CITY!
YOU'LL NEVER GET ME! HA-HA-- NEVER...
...NEVER! AIEEEE!
GHASTLY! WHAT COULD HAVE MADE HIM DO IT? WHO WAS HE TALKING TO?
AND... AND WHAT DID HE SEE?
THOSE IN HENRI MARLEAU'S APARTMENT WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT GROTESQUE SIGHT HE SAW... A SIGHT THAT DROVE HIM TO HIS VIOLENT DEATH! BUT WHEN THEY REACHED HIS BROKEN BODY THEY S SOMETHING EQUALLY AS STARTLING... A BURNING VIOLIN!
THE END

THE WITCH'S CLAW

THE CAT SAW US KILL AUNT ANNIE! I CAN'T STAND THE WAY IT LOOKS AT US! WALTER, I'M AFRAID OF THE CAT!

DON'T WORRY! I'LL KILL IT, TOO!

GRACE AND WALTER BROCK WERE A MURDEROUS PAIR! THEY KILLED AN OLD WOMAN AND HER BELOVED LITTLE ANIMAL WITHOUT A TWINGE OF CONSCIENCE! THEY THOUGHT THE THING WAS FINISHED! WHAT THEY DIDN'T REALIZE WAS THE GHASTLY, HORRIBLE FATE IN STORE FOR THEM...

WALTER AND GRACE BROCK LIVED WITH WALTER'S RICH AUNT...

YOU'RE JUST A PAIR OF LOAFERS! GET OUT IN THE KITCHEN AND DO THE DISHES, GRACE! DO YOU THINK I'M GOING TO DO ALL THE WORK AROUND HERE?

I'LL DO THE DISHES... DON'T GET SO EXCITED!

AN' YOU, WALTER! TOO LAZY TO GET A JOB!

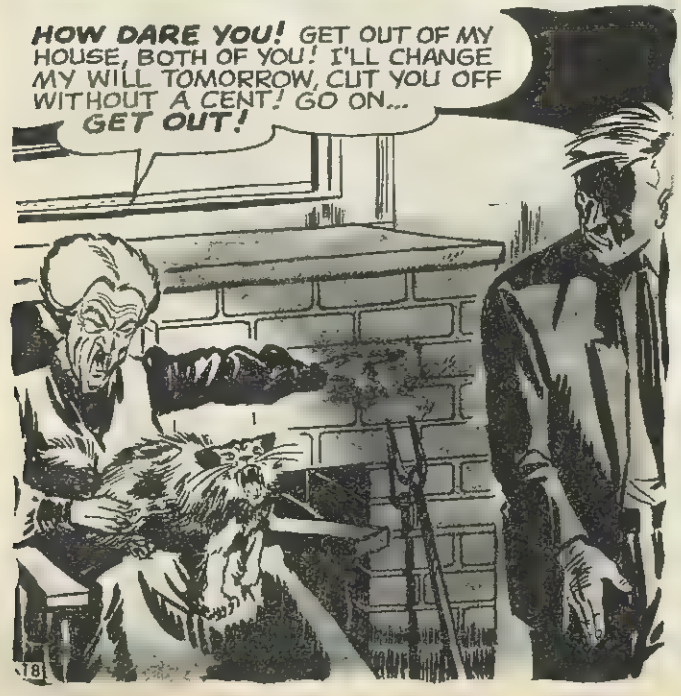
AND LATER, IN THE KITCHEN...
SHE'S A NASTY OLD WOMAN! I HATE HER!
IF ONLY SHE'D DIE! WE'D INHERIT IT ALL! I WONDER... WHY NOT? THAT WOULD FIX EVERYTHING!

GRACE! IF SOME NIGHT WE KILLED HER...!
I WISH WE DARED!

WE'D SAY SHE'D GONE TO VISIT FRIENDS OUT WEST! SHE NEVER TALKS TO ANYONE ABOUT HER AFFAIRS!

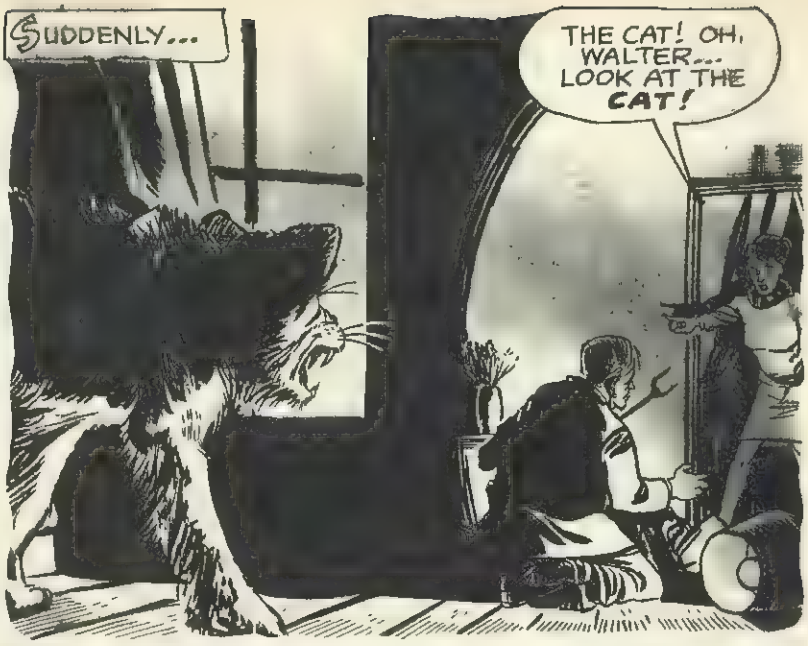
THEY WERE STILL THINKING OF IT WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE LIVING ROOM, AND...
YAAH! GET OUT OF MY WAY YOU WRETCHED ANIMAL!

GET AWAY FROM ME YOU HELLION...!


HOW DARE YOU! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE, BOTH OF YOU! I'LL CHANGE MY WILL TOMORROW, CUT YOU OFF WITHOUT A CENT! GO ON... GET OUT!

AAAIEEEE!

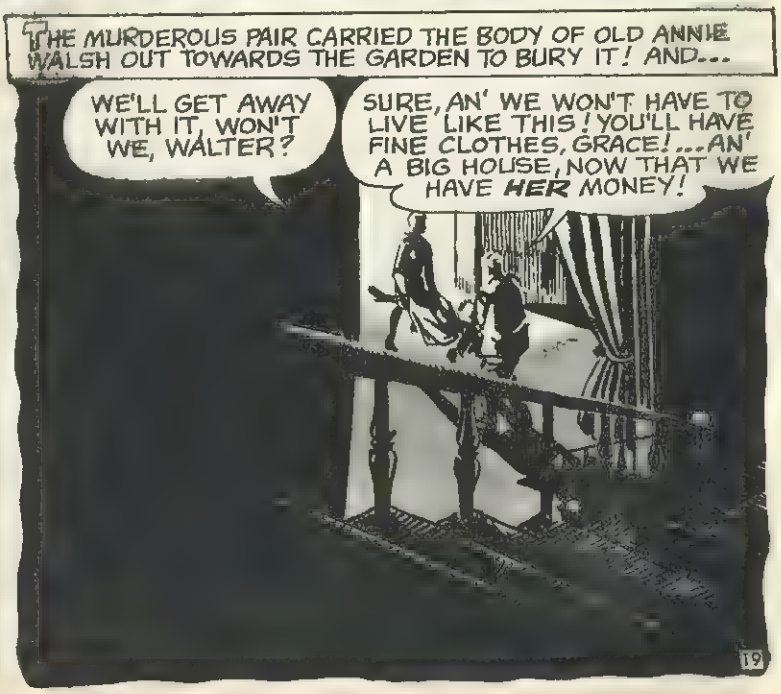
AND THEN...
SHE'S DEAD! GRACE, WE'RE RICH... RICH!


SUDDENLY...
THE CAT! OH, WALTER... LOOK AT THE CAT!

I'LL KILL THE ROTTEN THING... I'LL GET RID OF IT!
IT SAW US KILL THE OLD WOMAN! KILL IT, WALTER! KILL IT!

CRACK!

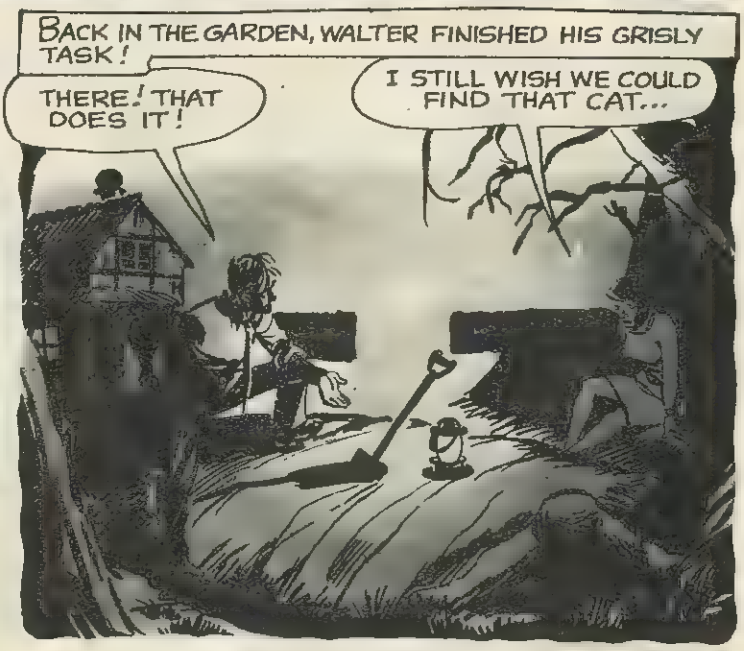
AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT...
SO A CAT HAS NINE LIVES, EH? WELL I SMASHED ALL NINE AT ONCE! HA! HA!


THE MURDEROUS PAIR CARRIED THE BODY OF OLD ANNIE WALSH OUT TOWARDS THE GARDEN TO BURY IT! AND...
WE'LL GET AWAY WITH IT, WON'T WE, WALTER?
SURE, AN' WE WON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THIS! YOU'LL HAVE FINE CLOTHES, GRACE! ...AN' A BIG HOUSE, NOW THAT WE HAVE HER MONEY!

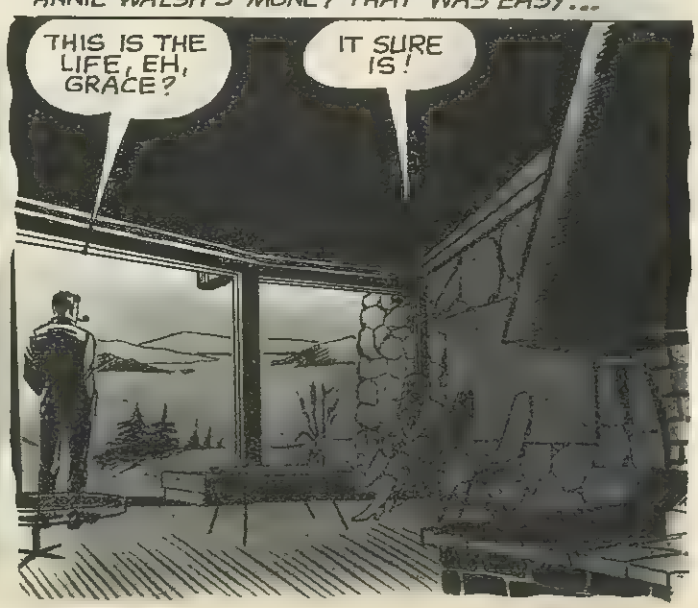
AND OUT IN THE GARDEN...
SHOULDN'T WE BURY THE CAT HERE, TOO?
SURE WE SHOULD! HA, HA! LET'S GO GET IT!

BUT WHEN THEY GOT TO THE LIVING ROOM...
IT... IT ISN'T HERE!
QUEER... IT WAS LYING RIGHT HERE!

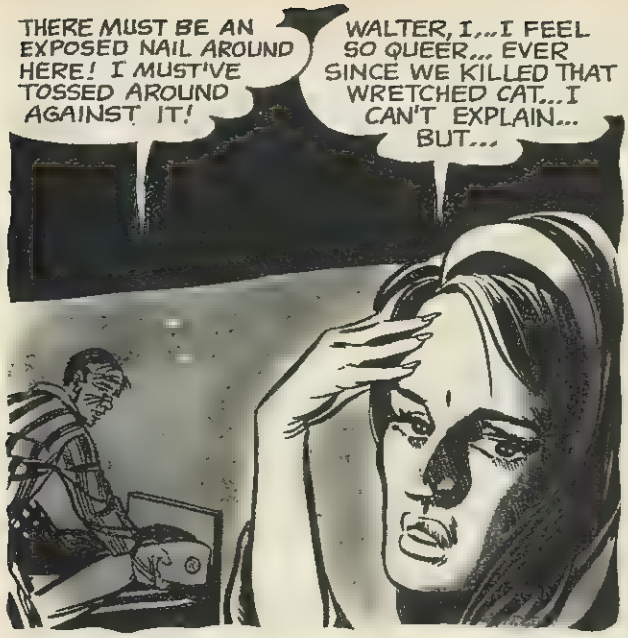
MAYBE I DIDN'T QUITE KILL IT! IT PROBABLY CRAWLED AWAY SOMEWHERE TO DIE!
IT... IT OUGHT TO BE SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE! BUT IT ISN'T! WALTER... I DON'T LIKE THIS!

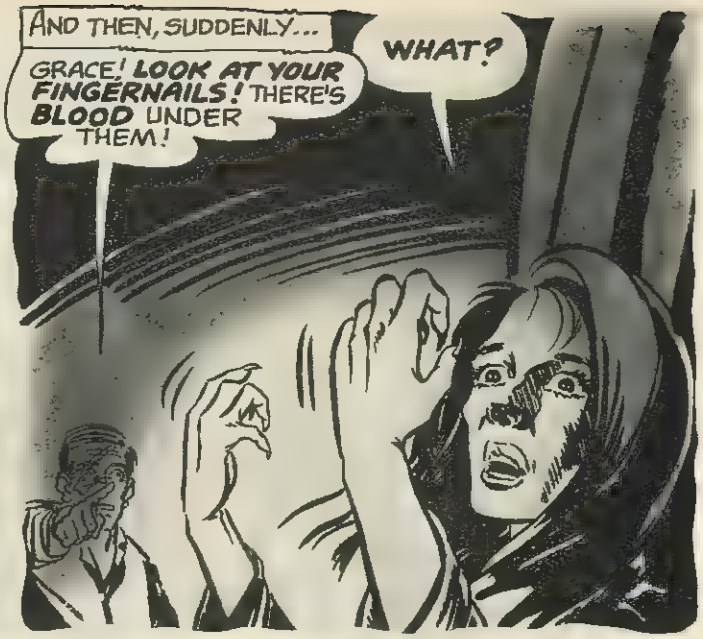

BACK IN THE GARDEN, WALTER FINISHED HIS GRISLY TASK!
THERE! THAT DOES IT!
I STILL WISH WE COULD FIND THAT CAT...

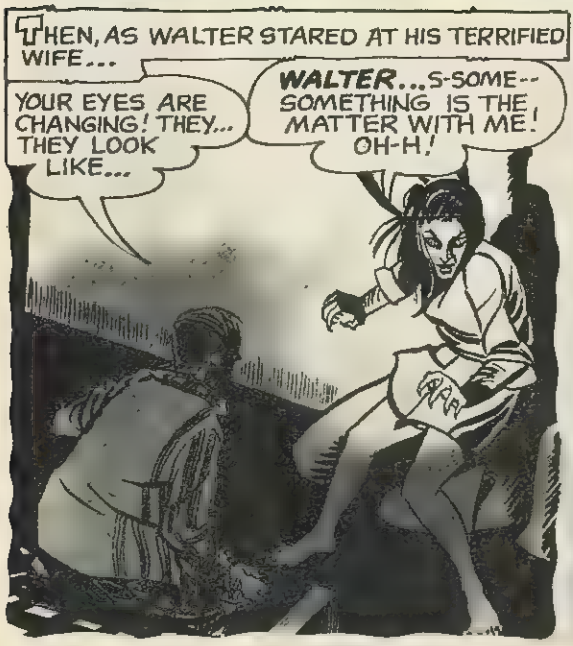
WE'LL FIND IT! IF IT ISN'T DEAD YET, WE'LL KILL IT! NOW, STOP WORRYIN'!

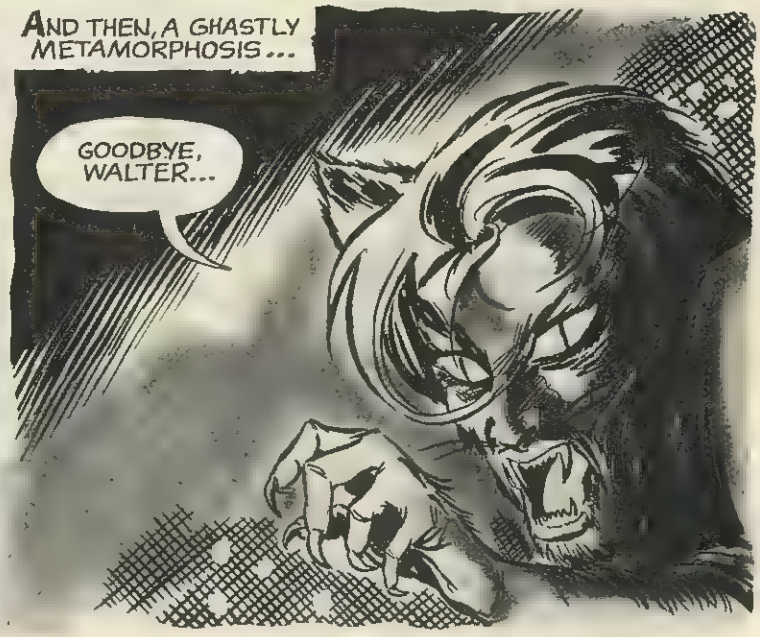

DEAD OR ALIVE... THEY NEVER FOUND THE CAT! BUT THEY HAD NO TROUBLE FORGETTING IT! WITH OLD ANNIE WALSH'S MONEY THAT WAS EASY...
THIS IS THE LIFE, EH, GRACE?
IT SURE IS!

FOR MONTHS WALTER NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF ANNIE WALSH'S CAT! BUT ONE SUMMER MORNING, WALTER AWAKENED WITH A START...
WHAT TH--? I MUST'VE SCRATCHED MYSELF! I WONDER HOW I DID THAT TO MY HAND?
THE BLOOD WAS ALREADY DRY... WALTER THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT... BUT THE NEXT NIGHT HE HAD A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE...
SOMETHING ATTACKING ME! SOMETHING HIDEOUS! GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU... YOU THING!
SOMETHING INVISIBLE... HORRIBLE... ATTACKING HIM... SCRATCHING HIM...
I CAN'T STOP IT FROM SCRATCHING ME! YAAAHHH!
AND FOR AN INSTANT, IT SEEMED THAT THE GHOST OF THE DEAD CAT WAS STARING DOWN AT HIM...
STOP! AAIEE!
THEN HIS SCREAMS AWAKEN GRACE, AND...
OHHH! AGH! AAIIEEE!
WALTER! WAKE UP! YOU'RE HAVING A NIGHTMARE!
I DREAMED SOMETHING WAS ATTACKING ME! IT WAS HORRIBLE!
WALTER! YOU'RE ALL SCRATCHED! I DON'T UNDERSTAND!


THERE MUST BE AN EXPOSED NAIL AROUND HERE! I MUST'VE TOSSED AROUND AGAINST IT!
WALTER, I...I FEEL SO QUEER... EVER SINCE WE KILLED THAT WRETCHED CAT...I CAN'T EXPLAIN... BUT...


AND THEN, SUDDENLY...
GRACE! LOOK AT YOUR FINGERNAILS! THERE'S BLOOD UNDER THEM!
WHAT?


THEN, AS WALTER STARED AT HIS TERRIFIED WIFE...
YOUR EYES ARE CHANGING! THEY... THEY LOOK LIKE...
WALTER...S-SOME--SOMETHING IS THE MATTER WITH ME! OH-H!


AND THEN, A GHASTLY METAMORPHOSIS...
GOODBYE, WALTER...

OH, NO! ...NO!

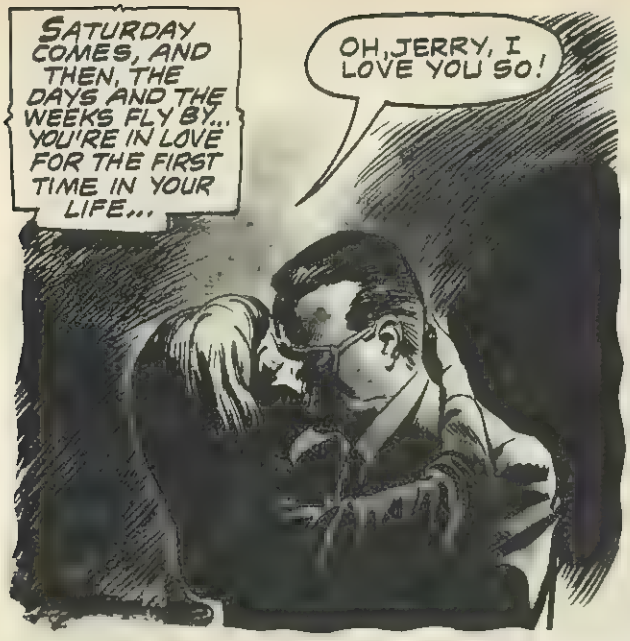
PFFSSSTT!
NO...NO! AAAIIEEE!
THE END

BURN, MISER, BURN

YOUR NAME IS JEREMIAH COURTLAND! YOU'RE 33 YEARS OLD AND RIGHT NOW YOU'RE IN A **TERRIBLE HURRY!**

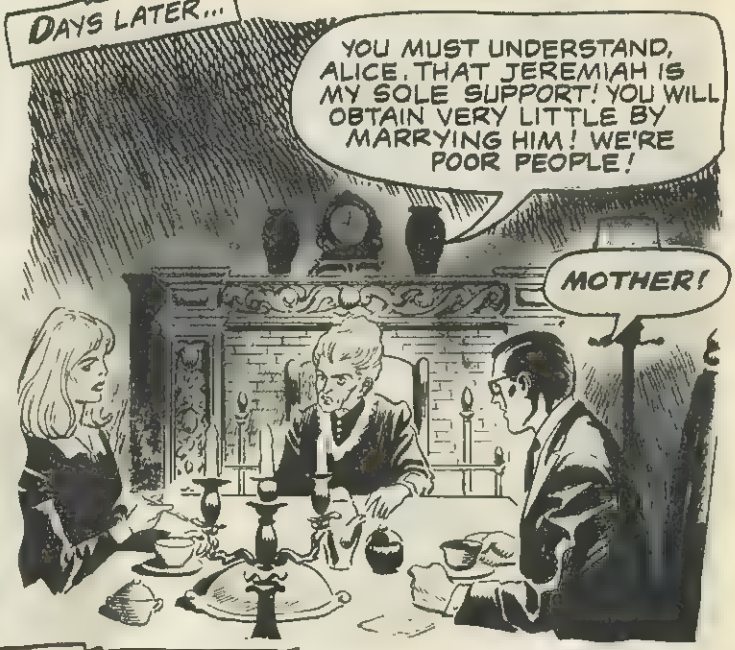
AN INSTANT LATER YOU START DOWN THE STREET...

BUT YOUR IRRITATION DOESN'T LAST JERIMIAH! YOU LAPSE INTO DEPRESSION!
'MORNING, MR. COURTLAND!
GOOD MORNING, HENRY!
YOU SLIP OFF YOUR COAT AND SIT AT THE WINDOW WHERE YOU WORKED 15 YEARS...
MORNING, ED! BUSY DAY AHEAD, EH?
BUT INSTEAD OF EDWARD RAYMOND, YOU HEAR A STRANGER...
I'M SORRY, BUT MR. RAYMOND WAS TAKEN ILL! I'M REPLACING HIM TEMPORARILY!
OH...ER...EXCUSE ME... I MEAN... ER... HOW DO YOU DO?
SUDDENLY YOU FEEL DIFFERENT! YOU NO LONGER FEEL DEPRESSED, YOU FEEL WONDERFUL!
SHE'S A PRETTY LITTLE THING! IT'S...IT'S NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE SO PRETTY NEARBY!
YOU BREEZE THROUGH THE DAY, BUT THAT NIGHT WHEN YOU GET HOME...
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU'RE TWENTY MINUTES LATE!
SORRY! I WALKED HOME A NEW GIRL AT THE BANK!
GIRL? YOU'VE GOT NO TIME FOR GIRLS, YOUNG MAN! YOU'VE GOT YOUR MOTHER TO SUPPORT, AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!
BUT SOMEHOW, YOUR MOTHER'S RAVING DON'T BOTHER YOU... YOU'RE TOO HAPPY!
SHE SAID SHE'D GO TO THE MOVIES WITH ME ON SATURDAY... I-I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT!


SATURDAY COMES, AND THEN, THE DAYS AND THE WEEKS FLY BY... YOU'RE IN LOVE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YOUR LIFE...
OH, JERRY, I LOVE YOU SO!

IF ONLY YOUR MOTHER WOULD GIVE YOU SOME PEACE, YOUR LIFE WOULD BE COMPLETE...
JEREMIAH, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING MARRIAGE! YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME... HOW WOULD I LIVE?

MOTHER, THE HOUSE IS BIG ENOUGH FOR THE THREE OF US! NATURALLY, I WILL STILL SUPPORT YOU!
BUT... BUT... OH, ALL RIGHT, SON... BRING HER TO SEE ME!

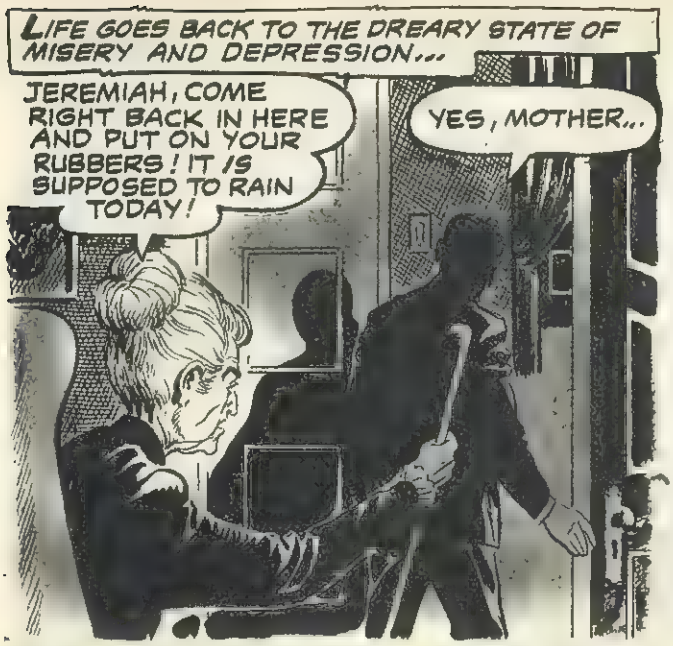

DAYS LATER...
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, ALICE, THAT JEREMIAH IS MY SOLE SUPPORT! YOU WILL OBTAIN VERY LITTLE BY MARRYING HIM! WE'RE POOR PEOPLE!
MOTHER!

I THINK SHE SHOULD KNOW THE TRUTH, SON! ALICE, JEREMIAH BARELY MAKES ENOUGH MONEY NOW TO SUPPORT HIMSELF AND ME...LET ALONE, A WIFE!
I INTEND TO KEEP MY JOB! THERE'LL BE ENOUGH MONEY!

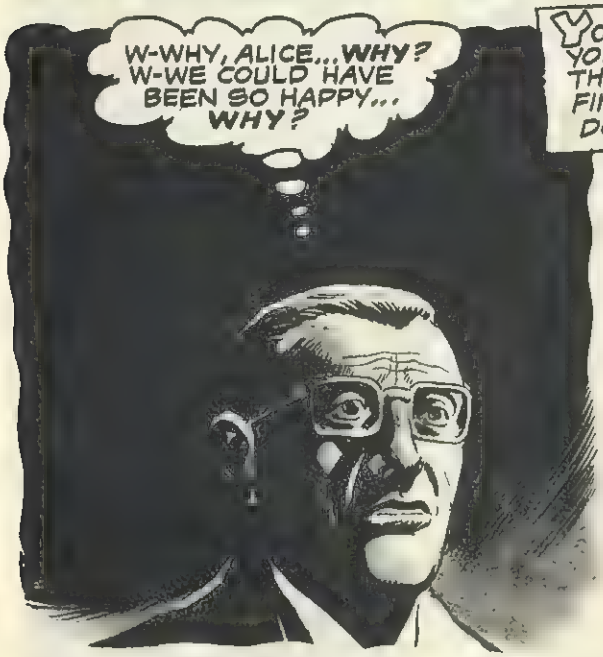
YOU'RE PROUD OF ALICE AND YOU TELL HER SO...
MOST WOMEN THINK THAT WHEN THEY MARRY, THEY WON'T HAVE TO WORK ANYMORE! ALICE, YOU'RE A WONDERFUL GIRL!
I'M NOT WONDERFUL, JERRY, I'M USED TO WORKING!

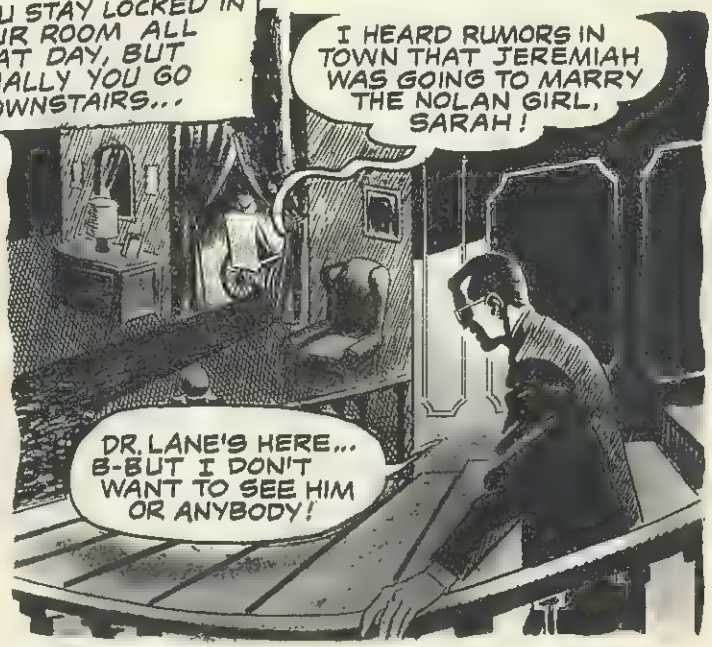
IN MY FAMILY, WE'VE NEVER HAD ANY MONEY! WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO PAY THE MORTGAGE ON OUR LITTLE HOUSE FOR TEN YEARS...AND WE STILL HAVEN'T MANAGED!

YOU KISS ALICE GOOD NIGHT AND GO HOME... YOUR LIFE SEEMS PERFECT UNTIL YOUR MOTHER GREETS YOU...
SHE'LL NEVER BE FAITHFUL TO YOU! I KNOW THE TYPE... ALL SHE WANTS IS MONEY!
FOR GOD'S SAKE, MOTHER... STOP IT! ALICE WON'T BE UNFAITHFUL! SHE LOVES ME! SHE'S NOT MONEY-HUNGRY... YOU ARE!
THAT NIGHT
NOW THAT EDWARD'S BACK, I MISS NOT SEEING ALICE DURING THE DAY! POOR KID... THIS IS SUCH A BAD NEIGHBORHOOD! IT'LL DO HER GOOD TO GET OUT OF HERE!
BUT WHEN YOU REACH ALICES...
ALICE!
YOU RUSH TO THE PORCH SCARCELY AWARE OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING...
YOU'LL WHAT, JUNIOR? BEAT IT! BEFORE I BREAK YOU IN TWO!
LET GO OF HER OR I'LL...
J-JERRY!
YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID... SCRAM!
OH, JERRY (SOB) I DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE THIS WAY!
FOR A LONG TIME YOU CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE... YOUR MOTHER WAS RIGHT! ALICE IS UNFAITHFUL!
AND THEN I CAME HOME! I-I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND, MOTHER!
BECAUSE SHE'S A CHEAP, LITTLE HUSSY! DON'T FRET... YOU'VE GOT YOUR MOTHER TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!


LIFE GOES BACK TO THE DREARY STATE OF MISERY AND DEPRESSION...
JEREMIAH, COME RIGHT BACK IN HERE AND PUT ON YOUR RUBBERS! IT IS SUPPOSED TO RAIN TODAY!
YES, MOTHER...

BUT AS UNHAPPY AS YOU ARE, YOU'RE NOT PREPARED FOR THE SHOCK, A WEEK LATER AS YOU OPEN THE MORNING PAPER!
DAILY ITEM
LOCAL GIRL KILLS SELF
ALICE NOLAN 24 SWALLOWS POISON

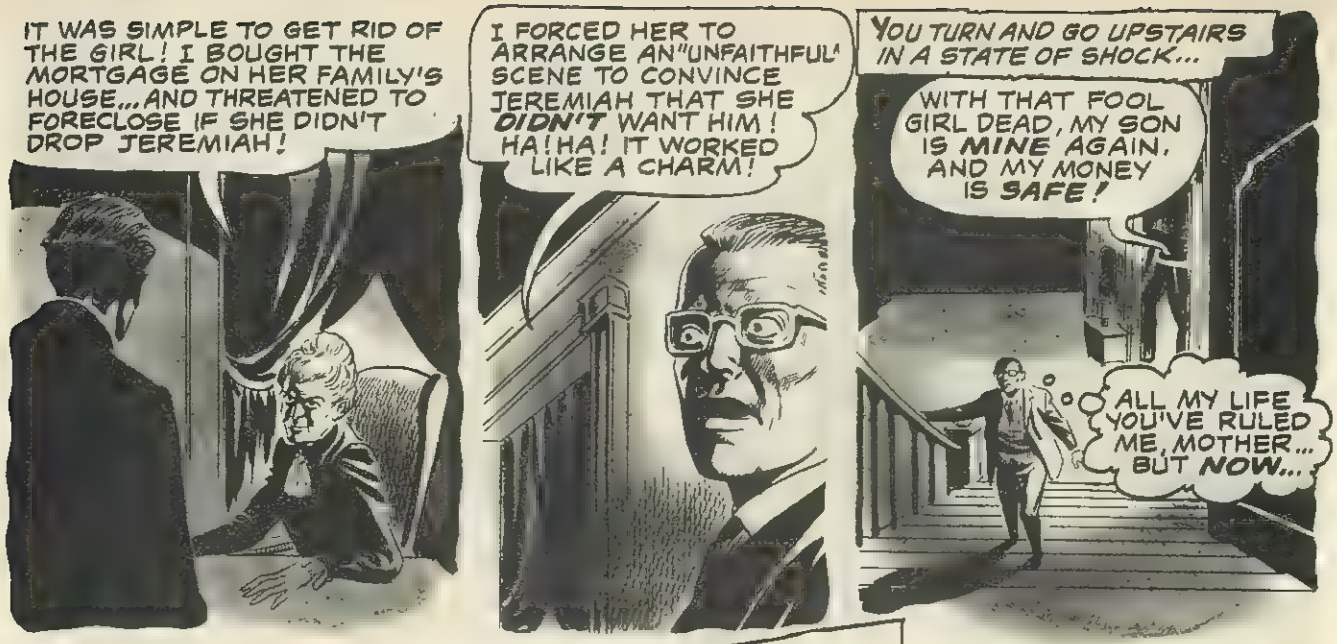

W-WHY, ALICE... WHY? W-WE COULD HAVE BEEN SO HAPPY... WHY?

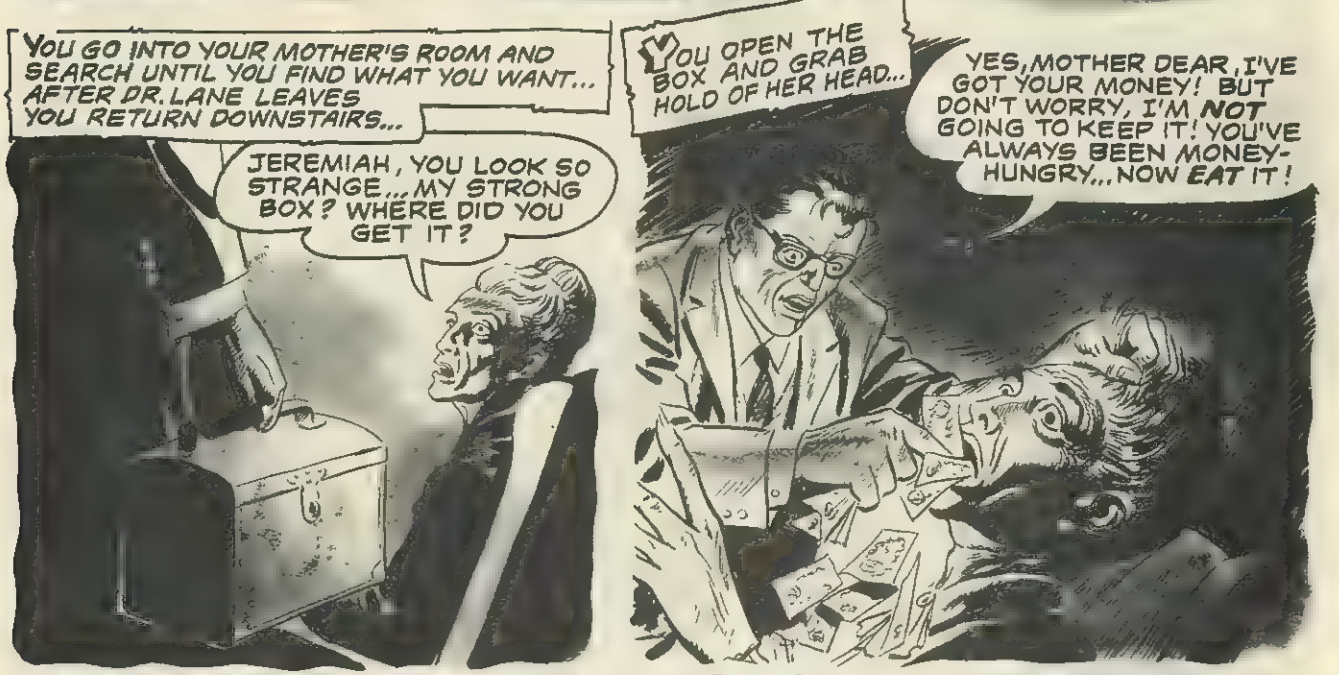

YOU STAY LOCKED IN YOUR ROOM ALL THAT DAY, BUT FINALLY YOU GO DOWNSTAIRS...
I HEARD RUMORS IN TOWN THAT JEREMIAH WAS GOING TO MARRY THE NOLAN GIRL, SARAH!
DR. LANE'S HERE... B-BUT I DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM OR ANYBODY!

YOU TURN AND HEAD BACK UPSTAIRS AND FREEZE AT THE WORDS YOU HEAR...
YES, BUT I PUT A STOP TO IT! THE GIRL WAS WORTHLESS... I'M GLAD SHE'S DEAD!

YOU DON'T MEAN THAT!
OH, BUT I DO! I NEED JEREMIAH, DR. LANE! I NEED HIS INCOME TO SUPPORT ME!

BUT WHY, SARAH? WHEN SAM DIED, HE LEFT YOU OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS!
JEREMIAH DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT MONEY... AND I DON'T WANT HIM TO! A SON SHOULD TAKE CARE OF HIS MOTHER!


IT WAS SIMPLE TO GET RID OF THE GIRL! I BOUGHT THE MORTGAGE ON HER FAMILY'S HOUSE... AND THREATENED TO FORECLOSE IF SHE DIDN'T DROP JEREMIAH!
I FORCED HER TO ARRANGE AN "UNFAITHFUL" SCENE TO CONVINCE JEREMIAH THAT SHE DIDN'T WANT HIM! HA! HA! IT WORKED LIKE A CHARM!
YOU TURN AND GO UPSTAIRS IN A STATE OF SHOCK...
WITH THAT FOOL GIRL DEAD, MY SON IS MINE AGAIN. AND MY MONEY IS SAFE!
ALL MY LIFE YOU'VE RULED ME, MOTHER... BUT NOW...

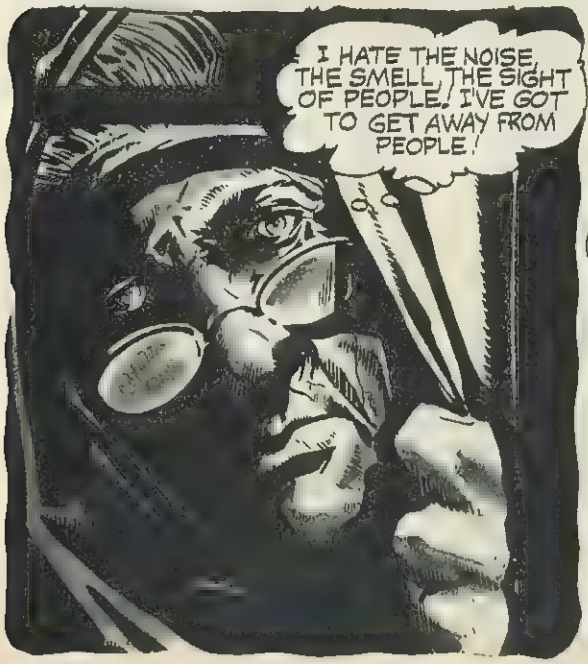

YOU GO INTO YOUR MOTHER'S ROOM AND SEARCH UNTIL YOU FIND WHAT YOU WANT... AFTER DR. LANE LEAVES YOU RETURN DOWNSTAIRS...
JEREMIAH, YOU LOOK SO STRANGE... MY STRONG BOX? WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
YOU OPEN THE BOX AND GRAB HOLD OF HER HEAD...
YES, MOTHER DEAR, I'VE GOT YOUR MONEY! BUT DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT GOING TO KEEP IT! YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN MONEY-HUNGRY... NOW EAT IT!

DON'T LOOK FRIGHTENED, MOTHER... I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU! I'LL STAY WITH YOU... JUST LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED!
IT'S THE NEXT MORNING... YOU CAN'T HEAR WHAT THE SHOCKED TOWNSPEOPLE ARE SAYING! "YOU'RE DEAD"!
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND! SARAH WAS SUCH A GOOD MOTHER! SHE DID EVERYTHING SHE COULD FOR JEREMIAH'S HAPPINESS!
TH-THEY SAY HE DID IT...
THE END

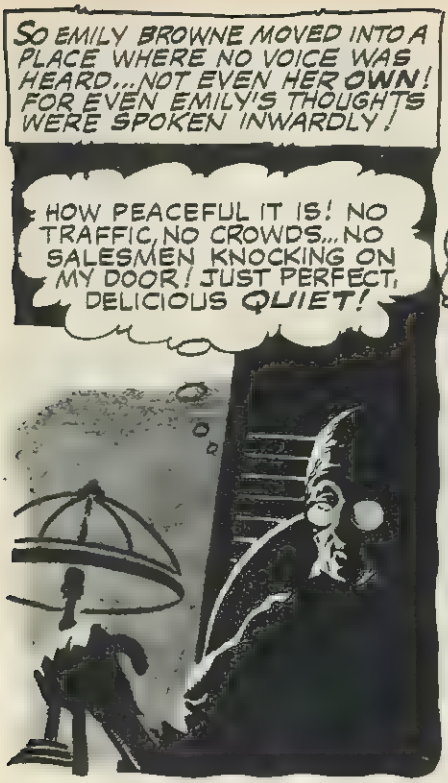
THE MUMMIES

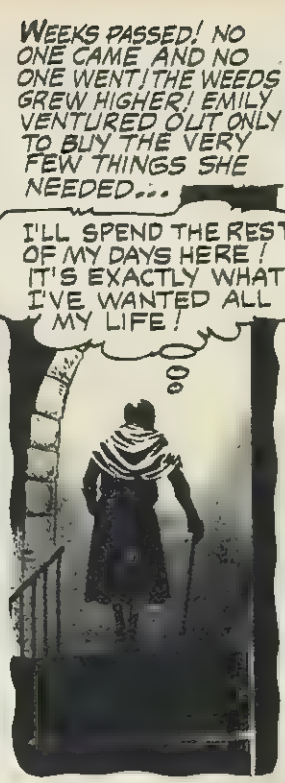
The STRANGER HAD KILLED SWIFTLY AND WELL! HE KNEW THAT DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES... AND **WALLS** DON'T SPEAK... EXCEPT WHEN THOSE WALLS CONTAIN A SECRET THAT SHRIEKS TO HEAVEN OF **HORROR** SO NAMELESS THAT ONLY THE DEAD CAN WHISPER IT... TO THE **DEAD!!!**

MANY PEOPLE HATE THE BIG CITY! EMILY BROWNE HATED IT BECAUSE SHE COULDN'T FIND IN IT THE PEACEFULL SOLITUDE SHE CRAVED...

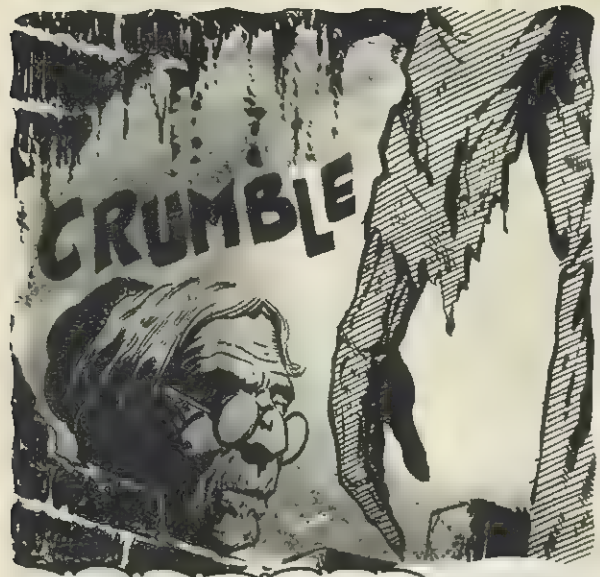


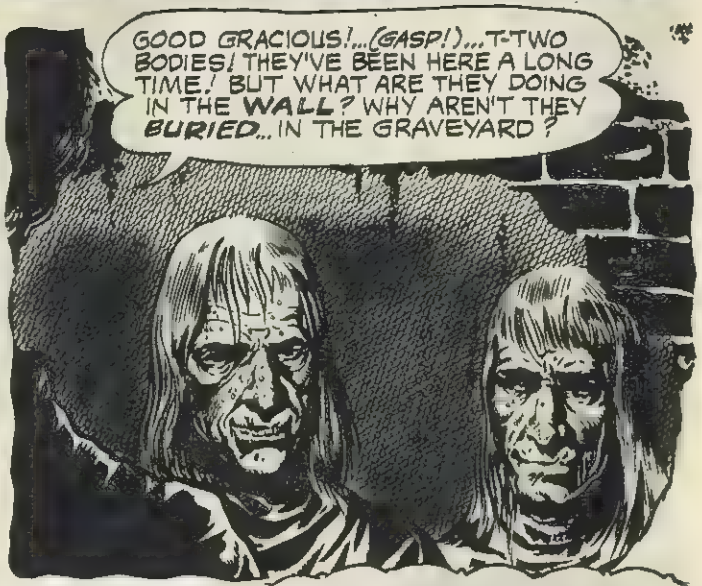
"GETTING AWAY" MEANT NOT ONLY **DISTANCE**... BUT **PRIVACY!** THE MOST UNVISITED, UNINHABITED NEIGHBORHOOD WAS CONSIDERED TO BE **IDEAL** BY EMILY...


SO EMILY BROWNE MOVED INTO A PLACE WHERE NO VOICE WAS HEARD...NOT EVEN HER OWN! FOR EVEN EMILY'S THOUGHTS WERE SPOKEN INWARDLY!
HOW PEACEFUL IT IS! NO TRAFFIC, NO CROWDS...NO SALESMEN KNOCKING ON MY DOOR! JUST PERFECT, DELICIOUS QUIET!


WEEKS PASSED! NO ONE CAME AND NO ONE WENT! THE WEEDS GREW HIGHER! EMILY VENTURED OUT ONLY TO BUY THE VERY FEW THINGS SHE NEEDED...
I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY DAYS HERE! IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'VE WANTED ALL MY LIFE!

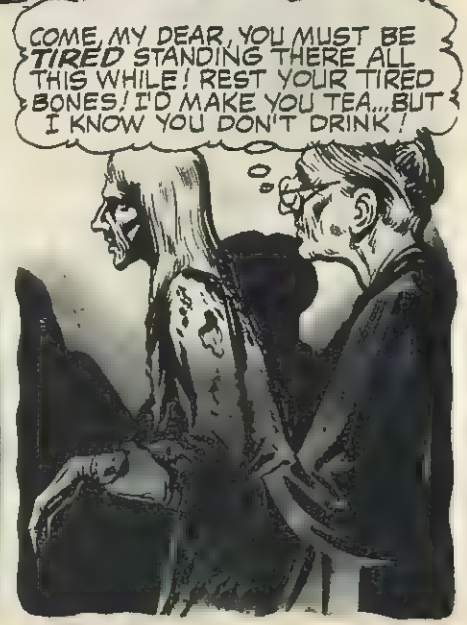
ONE NIGHT, WHILE SHE WAS NAILING UP A PICTURE...
T-THAT'S FUNNY! THE WALL'S GIVING AWAY!

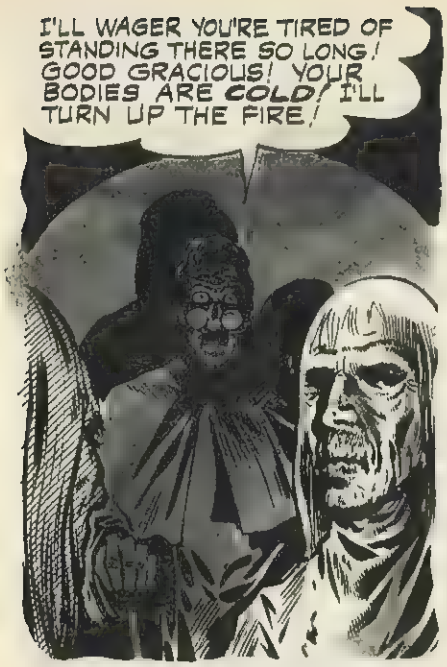

CRUMBLE

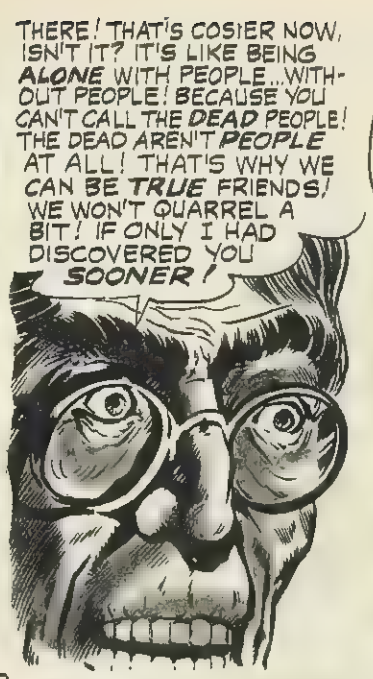

GOOD GRACIOUS!...(GASP!)...T-TWO BODIES! THEY'VE BEEN HERE A LONG TIME! BUT WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN THE WALL? WHY AREN'T THEY BURIED...IN THE GRAVEYARD?

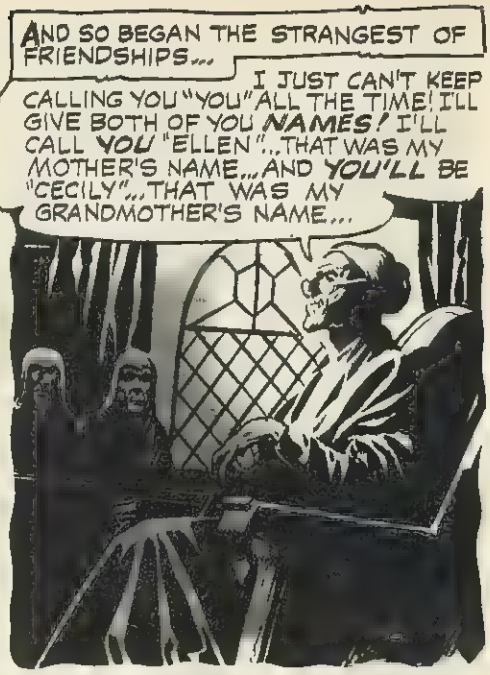
P-POOR THINGS! HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN WALLED UP? I IMAGINE THE REAL ESTATE AGENT DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE HERE, OR ELSE HE'D HAVE MENTIONED THEM TO ME!

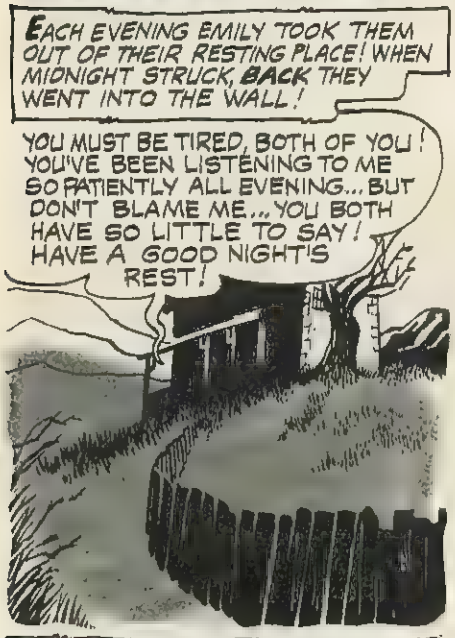
I'M GLAD THEY'RE HERE, THEY DON'T MAKE A BIT OF NOISE...THEY STARE AT YOU BUT THEY DON'T SPEAK! WHATEVER YOU SAY IS ALL RIGHT WITH THEM!

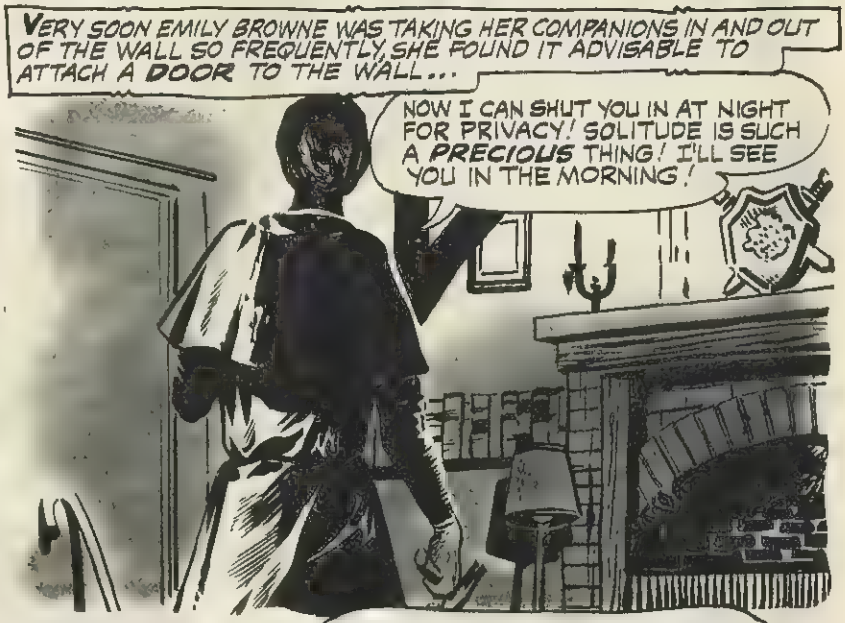

COME, MY DEAR, YOU MUST BE TIRED STANDING THERE ALL THIS WHILE! REST YOUR TIRED BONES! I'D MAKE YOU TEA...BUT I KNOW YOU DON'T DRINK!

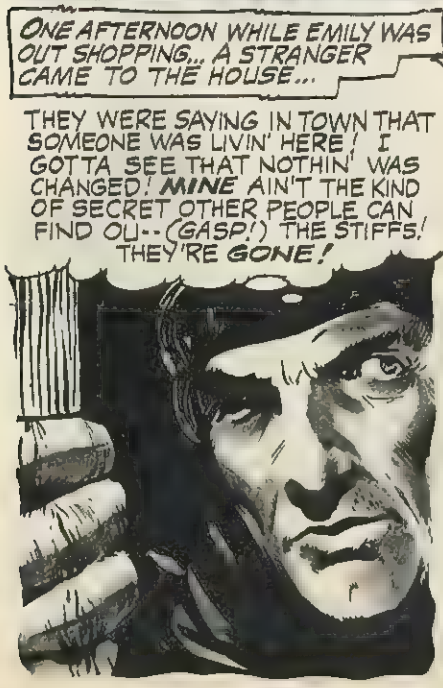

I'LL WAGER YOU'RE TIRED OF STANDING THERE SO LONG! GOOD GRACIOUS! YOUR BODIES ARE COLD! I'LL TURN UP THE FIRE!

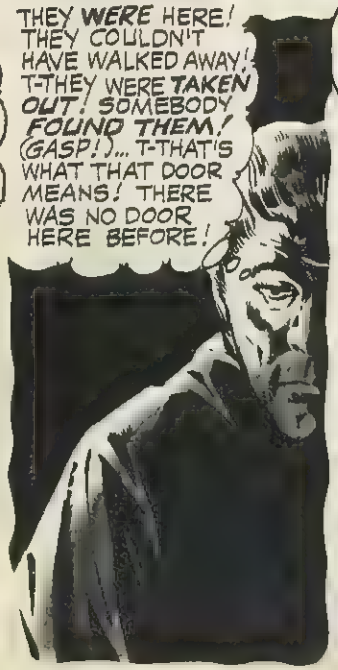

THERE! THAT'S COSIER NOW, ISN'T IT? IT'S LIKE BEING ALONE WITH PEOPLE...WITHOUT PEOPLE! BECAUSE YOU CAN'T CALL THE DEAD PEOPLE! THE DEAD AREN'T PEOPLE AT ALL! THAT'S WHY WE CAN BE TRUE FRIENDS! WE WON'T QUARREL A BIT! IF ONLY I HAD DISCOVERED YOU SOONER!

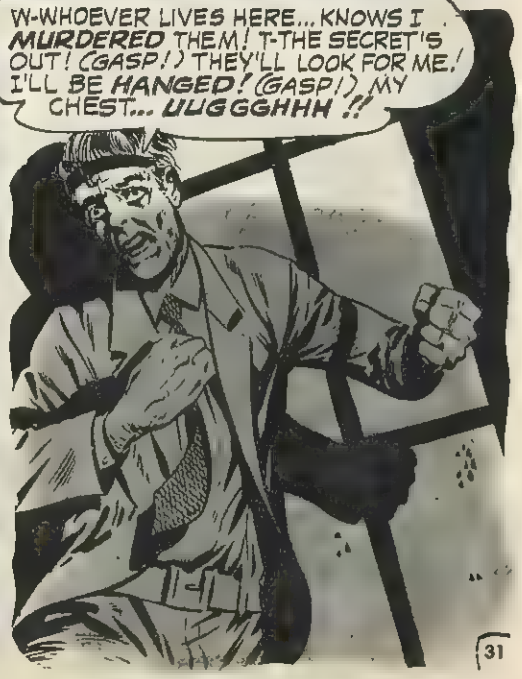

AND SO BEGAN THE STRANGEST OF FRIENDSHIPS...
I JUST CAN'T KEEP CALLING YOU "YOU" ALL THE TIME! I'LL GIVE BOTH OF YOU NAMES! I'LL CALL YOU "ELLEN"...THAT WAS MY MOTHER'S NAME...AND YOU'LL BE "CECILY"...THAT WAS MY GRANDMOTHER'S NAME...


EACH EVENING EMILY TOOK THEM OUT OF THEIR RESTING PLACE! WHEN MIDNIGHT STRUCK, BACK THEY WENT INTO THE WALL!
YOU MUST BE TIRED, BOTH OF YOU! YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO ME SO PATIENTLY ALL EVENING... BUT DON'T BLAME ME... YOU BOTH HAVE SO LITTLE TO SAY! HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S REST!


VERY SOON EMILY BROWNE WAS TAKING HER COMPANIONS IN AND OUT OF THE WALL SO FREQUENTLY, SHE FOUND IT ADVISABLE TO ATTACH A DOOR TO THE WALL...
NOW I CAN SHUT YOU IN AT NIGHT FOR PRIVACY! SOLITUDE IS SUCH A PRECIOUS THING! I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!


ONE AFTERNOON WHILE EMILY WAS OUT SHOPPING... A STRANGER CAME TO THE HOUSE...
THEY WERE SAYING IN TOWN THAT SOMEONE WAS LIVIN' HERE! I GOTTA SEE THAT NOTHIN' WAS CHANGED! MINE AIN'T THE KIND OF SECRET OTHER PEOPLE CAN FIND OU--(GASP!) THE STIFFS! THEY'RE GONE!

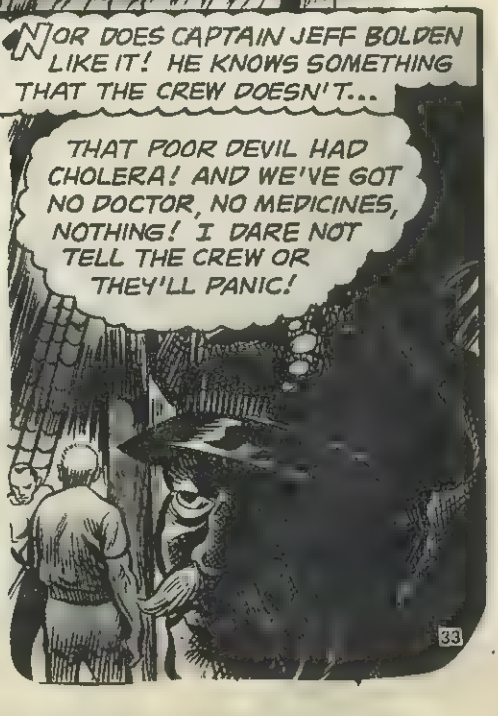

THEY WERE HERE! THEY COULDN'T HAVE WALKED AWAY! T-THEY WERE TAKEN OUT! SOMEBODY FOUND THEM! (GASP!)... T-THAT'S WHAT THAT DOOR MEANS! THERE WAS NO DOOR HERE BEFORE!


W-WHOEVER LIVES HERE... KNOWS I MURDERED THEM! T-THE SECRET'S OUT! (GASP!) THEY'LL LOOK FOR ME! I'LL BE HANGED! (GASP!) MY CHEST... UUGGGHHH!!

WHEN EMILY BROWNE CAME HOME THAT NIGHT SHE FOUND A STRANGE FIGURE LYING ON THE FLOOR...
GOOD GRACIOUS! WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?
WAIT! HE MUST BE DEAD, TOO! HE MUST'VE BEEN INSIDE THE WALL... MUST'VE BEEN DEEPER WITHIN THE WALL... TUCKED AWAY FROM SIGHT!
FORGIVE ME FOR OVERLOOKING YOU! I'M GOING TO PUT YOU BACK IN THE WALL AND LOCK YOU UP FOR THE NIGHT! TOMORROW WE'LL TALK ALL ABOUT IT AND WE'LL BECOME GOOD FRIENDS! NOW YOU MUST ALL REST... IT'S BEEN A TRYING DAY!
IT WAS ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER THAT THE UNCONSCIOUS STRANGER CAME TO...
(GASP!)... I'M WALLED UP WITH THE STIFFS!... L-LET ME OUT!... (GASP!) LET ME OUT... I'M SUFFOCATING! ...LET ME OUT!
QUIET, YOU NAUGHTY THINGS! YOU CAN'T COME OUT UNTIL THE MORNING! I'VE GOT A LOT OF MENDING TO DO... AND EMILY DOESN'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED!
(GASP!) THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE!... S-SHE WON'T LET ME OUT! NO! NO!
THE STRANGER SHRIEKED... THE STRANGER KICKED... THE STRANGER STRUGGLED... BUT THE DOOR DID NOT OPEN...
LET ME OUT!
THE SHRIEKING WENT ON FOR A LONG WHILE... BUT EMILY BROWNE ONLY SHRUGGED AND SMILED...
I MUSN'T LISTEN TO THEM! I MUSTN'T SPOIL THEM! THEY'LL GET TIRED SOON AND GO TO SLEEP!
SUDDENLY THE ROOM WAS SILENT! THE STRANGER MET HIS VICTIM'S FATE! EMILY BROWNE'S FINGERS MOVED CONTENTEDLY OVER THE FABRIC SHE WAS MENDING...
THAT'S BETTER! IT'S QUIET AGAIN! FOR A MOMENT I COULD ALMOST SWEAR... THOSE WALLS WERE SPEAKING!
THE END!

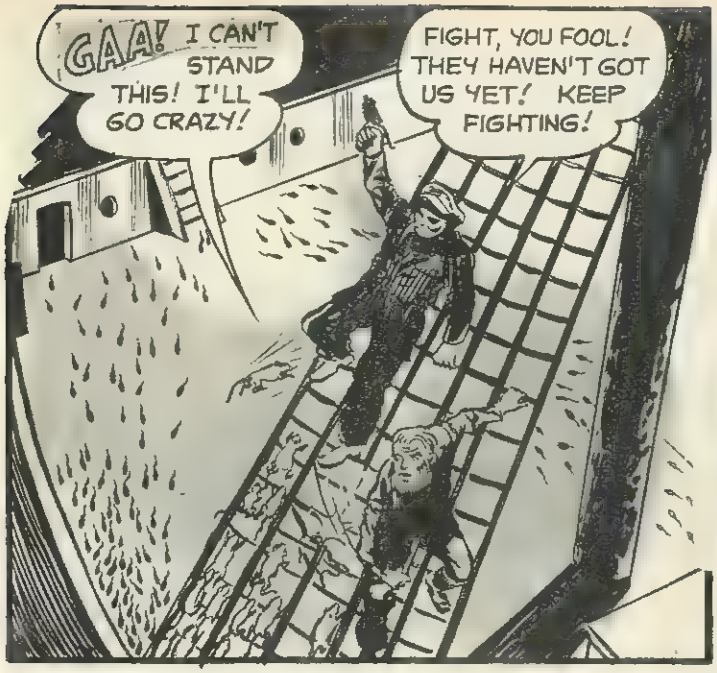
CRAWLING DEATH

UP FROM THE FETID HOLDS THEY SWARMED, SCENTING BLOOD, AVID FOR THE KILL! NOTHING COULD STAND BEFORE THE CRAWLING GRAY HORDES, AND MEN DIED, SCREAMING IN AGONY, HELPLESS BEFORE THE **REVOLT OF THE RATS!!**

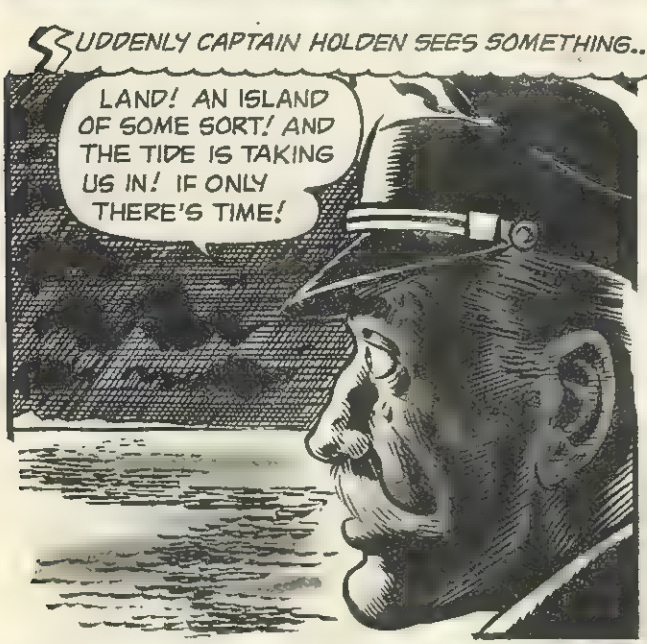


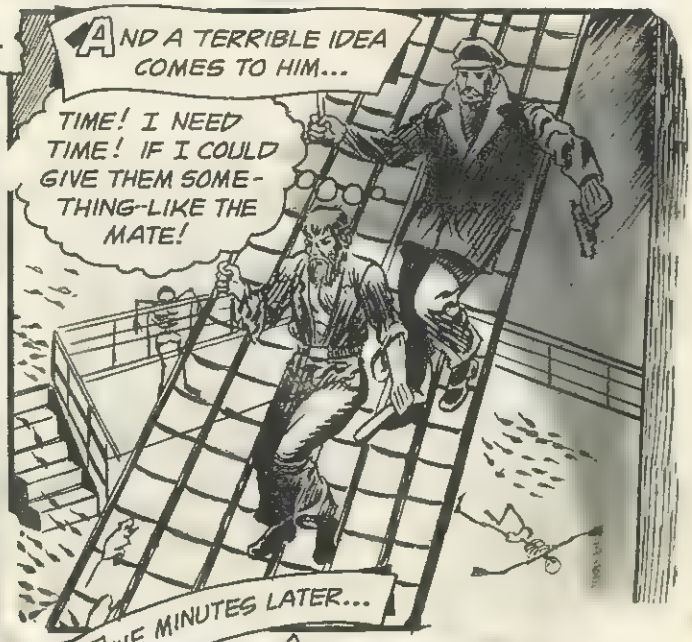
BUT THE CREW SOON KNOWS...
OHH--MY INSIDES BURN! D-DYING!
HELP ME--WATER!
IT'S CHOLERA! WE'LL ALL DIE!
AT THAT VERY MOMENT IN THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS...
WE'RE IN BAD TROUBLE, WOLFE! MOST OF THE MEN ARE DOWN WITH CHOLERA ALREADY! HARDLY ENOUGH LEFT TO WORK THE SHIP.
AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE, SIR! WORSE THAN THE CHOLERA EVEN! RATS!
RATS? YOU MEAN--?
YES, SIR! THEY'RE GETTING TOO BOLD! THEY SEEM TO KNOW WE'RE IN TROUBLE! AND THEY'RE SWARMING-- NEVER SAW SO MANY RATS IN MY LIFE! GOT ME SCARED, SIR!
THE NEXT DAY...
GREAT SCOTT! LOOK AT THAT, SIR! THOSE MEN BEING ATTACKED!
THEY'RE HELPLESS! GOT TO SAVE THEM!
WHERE DO THEY ALL COME FROM? THE SHIP'S ROTTEN WITH THEM!
FILTHY BRUTES! I HATE THEM!
AND WHEN THE RATS FINALLY ARE BEATEN OFF...
LOOK AT THAT! PICKED CLEAN!
WE'VE GOT A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS NOW! IF WE LOSE, WE'LL LOOK LIKE THAT!
UGH!

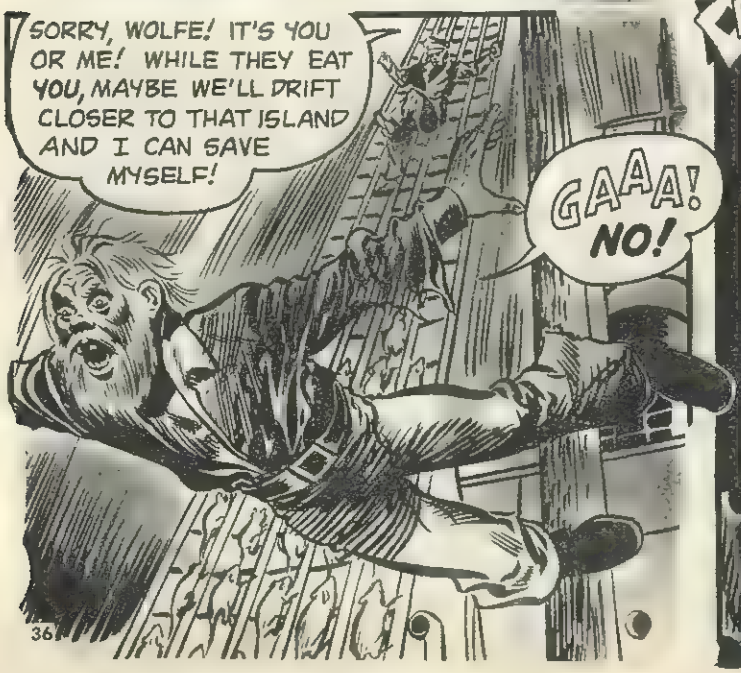
DAY AFTER GRUESOME DAY PASSES AND THE SAILORS DIE ONE BY ONE! THOSE SPARED BY THE CHOLERA MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED! FINALLY ONLY CAPTAIN BOLDEN AND THE MATE ARE LEFT..."
THEY'LL GET US, SIR! I FEEL IT! WE'LL BOTH GO LIKE THE REST.
KEEP YOU NERVE, YOU FOOL! KEEP FIRING! WE'RE DRIFTING, HELPLESS, BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE WE'LL SIGHT ANOTHER SHIP!
SUDDENLY...
AHHH--THEY GOT ME! HELP, SIR!!
COMING, MAN! FIGHT THEM! PULL THEM OFF!
EEEE! I'M COVERED WITH BITES!
COME ON! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO GET HIGH IN THE RIGGING!
THAT WON'T STOP THEM! THEY'LL SOB EAT US ALIVE!
LOOK AT THAT! THEY'VE TAKEN OVER THE SHIP!
WON'T BE LONG UNTIL THEY START UP AFTER US! HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE DONE!
HERE THEY COME!
EEEEEE!

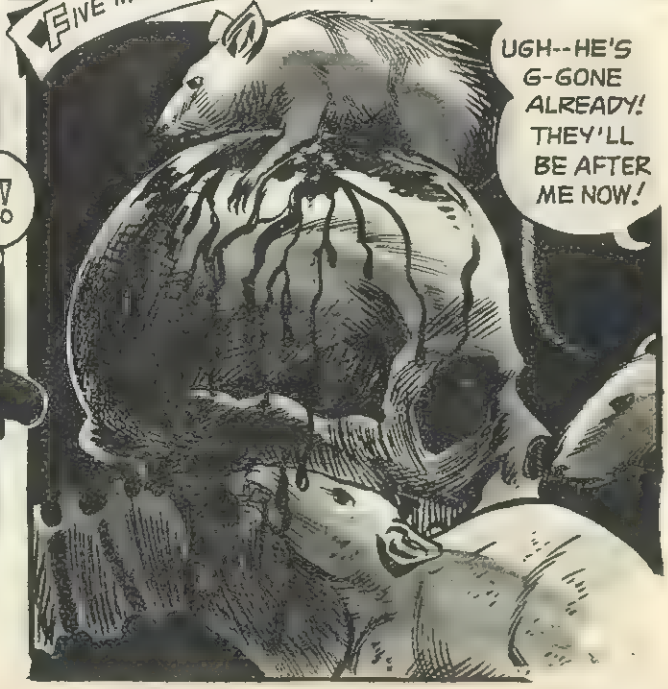

GAA! I CAN'T STAND THIS! I'LL GO CRAZY!
FIGHT, YOU FOOL! THEY HAVEN'T GOT US YET! KEEP FIGHTING!

LOOK AT THAT! THEY'RE GNAWING AT THE RIGGING! THEY WANT US TO FALL!
THOSE BRUTES CAN THINK! THEY'RE OUTSMARTING US!!


SUDDENLY CAPTAIN HOLDEN SEES SOMETHING...
LAND! AN ISLAND OF SOME SORT! AND THE TIDE IS TAKING US IN! IF ONLY THERE'S TIME!


AND A TERRIBLE IDEA COMES TO HIM...
TIME! I NEED TIME! IF I COULD GIVE THEM SOMETHING--LIKE THE MATE!


SORRY, WOLFE! IT'S YOU OR ME! WHILE THEY EAT YOU, MAYBE WE'LL DRIFT CLOSER TO THAT ISLAND AND I CAN SAVE MYSELF!
GAAA! NO!


FIVE MINUTES LATER...
UGH--HE'S G-GONE ALREADY! THEY'LL BE AFTER ME NOW!

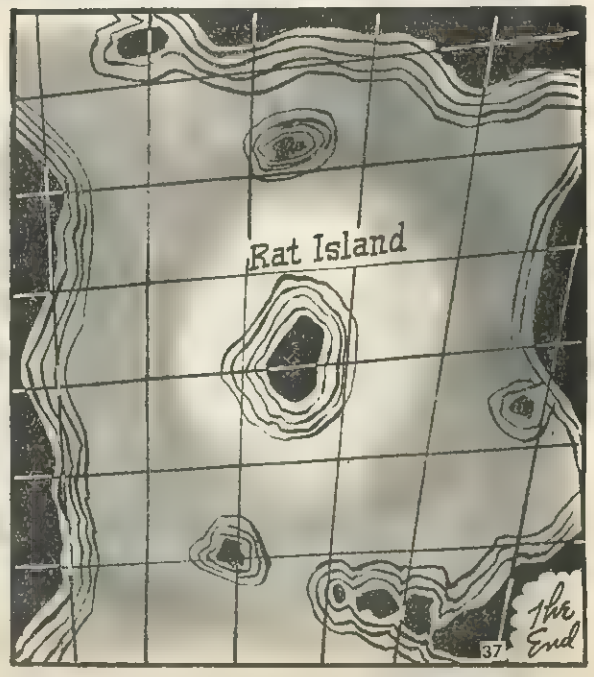
G-GOT TO GET TO THE TOP OF THIS CLIFF! M-MAYBE I CAN FIGHT THEM OFF! A SHIP MIGHT COME--ANYTHING! I CAN'T DIE LIKE THIS!
BOLDEN DID ESCAPE WHEN THE RATS ATTACKED WOLFE AND SOUGHT REFUGE ON A NEARBY ISLAND...BUT WAS IT AN ESCAPE FROM THE HUNGRY RODENTS?

A PIT! MIGHT LEAD DOWN INTO THE CLIFF! MAYBE I CAN HIDE SO...

NOTHING! STRAIGHT DOWN AND DARK! NO WAY TO GET DOWN! I- I'LL BE KILLED THAT WAY, TOO!

HERE THEY COME FOR ME! THEY'LL EAT ME ALIVE UNLESS I CHEAT THEM!

YOU WON'T GET ME AFTER ALL! HAH-HAH-- I'VE CHEATED YOU FILTHY BRUTES AT LAST! EEEE!!


Rat Island
The End

Horror Harbor

OUT OF THE SEA THEY CAME, DREADFUL DROWNED THINGS IN SEARCH OF VENGEANCE! MALIGNANT EYES, IN SLIME-COVERED FACES, FOLLOWED EVERY MOVEMENT OF THE NEWCOMERS TO BARTLEY MANOR! AND NEARBY, BROODING IN THE STORM, WERE THE FEARFUL ROCKS KNOWN AS **THE WEIRD WOMEN...**

AS DUSK FALLS, JAMES RANSOME AND HIS BRIDE OF A WEEK ARRIVE IN A VILLAGE ON THE CORNISH COAST...

TOBACCO *Periodicals* RENTING AGENT

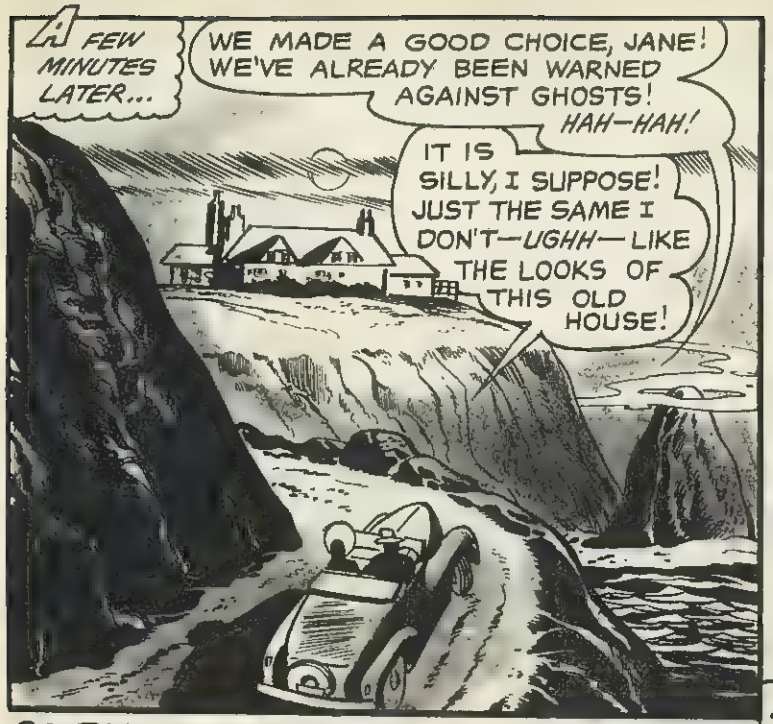
THIS MUST BE THE PLACE WHERE I PICK UP THE KEYS, JANE! JUST BE A MINUTE!

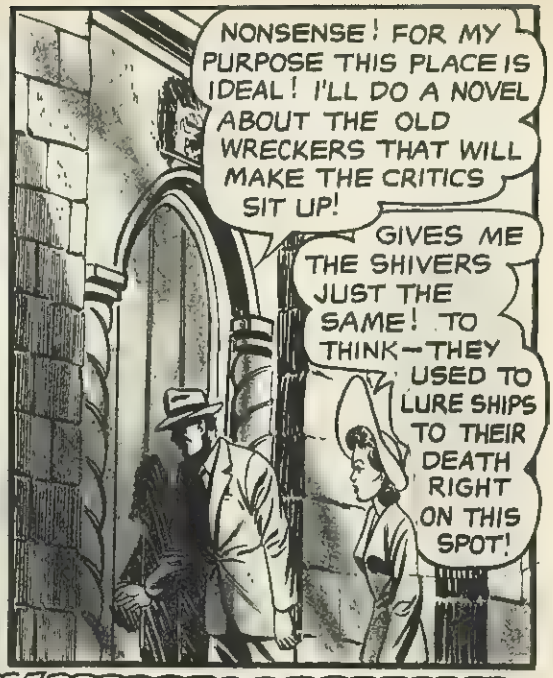
GET THE LONDON PAPERS WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, DARLING!

JAMES RANSOME GETS A STRANGE WARNING...

YOU SHOULD KNOW THE STORIES ABOUT BARTLEY MANOR, SIR! THEY AREN'T PRETTY! WEIRD THINGS HAPPEN, I'M TOLD! NOBODY WILL LIVE THERE!

SPLENDID! FINE! I'M DOING A NOVEL ABOUT THE OLD WRECKERS ALONG THIS COAST AND I CAN USE MATERIAL! BUT THANKS FOR THE WARNING!

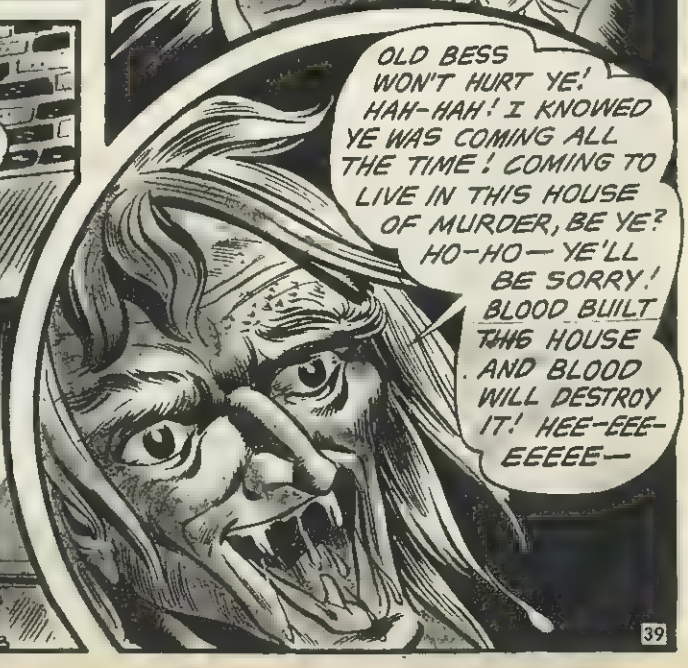

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
WE MADE A GOOD CHOICE, JANE! WE'VE ALREADY BEEN WARNED AGAINST GHOSTS! HAH—HAH!
IT IS SILLY, I SUPPOSE! JUST THE SAME I DON'T—UGHH—LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS OLD HOUSE!


NONSENSE! FOR MY PURPOSE THIS PLACE IS IDEAL! I'LL DO A NOVEL ABOUT THE OLD WRECKERS THAT WILL MAKE THE CRITICS SIT UP!
GIVES ME THE SHIVERS JUST THE SAME! TO THINK—THEY USED TO LURE SHIPS TO THEIR DEATH RIGHT ON THIS SPOT!

SUDDENLY...
HAH-HAH-HO-HO-EEE-
JIM! LISTEN—THAT HORRIBLE LAUGHTER!
GREAT SCOTT! COMING FROM SOMEWHERE IN THIS HOUSE!

JIM FINDS A CANDLE STUB, AND...
SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM BACK HERE—MAYBE IN THE KITCHENS OR SERVANTS' QUARTERS!
OHH—I WISH WE HADN'T COME. I'M FRIGHTENED, JIM!
HAH-HAH-HE HO-HO-

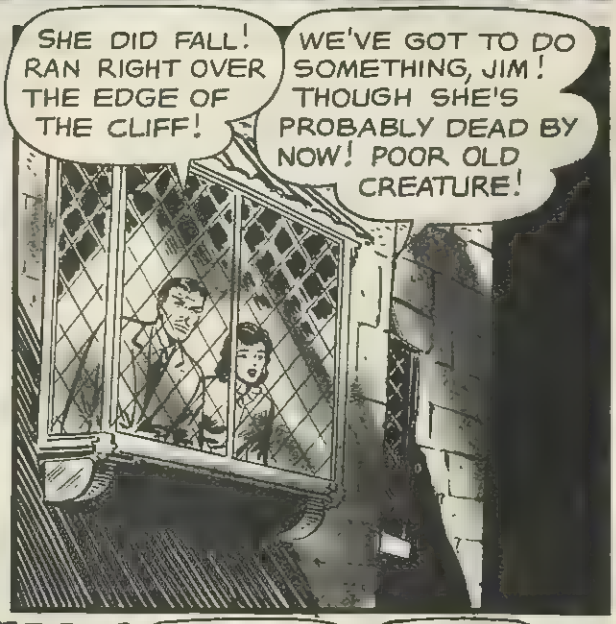
A DOOR CREAKS AS IT SLOWLY OPENS...
AN OLD WOMAN!
OH!
HEE-HEE—COME IN, MY DEARS! YOU NEEDN'T BE AFRAID OF OLD BESS!


OLD BESS WON'T HURT YE! HAH-HAH! I KNOWED YE WAS COMING ALL THE TIME! COMING TO LIVE IN THIS HOUSE OF MURDER, BE YE? HO-HO—YE'LL BE SORRY! BLOOD BUILT THIS HOUSE AND BLOOD WILL DESTROY IT! HEE-EEE-EEEEE—

I'LL LEAVE YE BE NOW! OLD BESS JUST WANTED TO GET WARM! NOW I'LL GO BACK TO THE SEA!
TO THE SEA?
JIM! S-SHE MUST BE INSANE!

THE OLD CRONE VANISHES LIKE A WRAITH...
GONE! JUST DISAPPEARED! COME ON, JANE, WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT SHE WAS DOING HERE!
M-MUST WE?

A MOMENT LATER...
THERE SHE IS! RUNNING TOWARD THOSE CLIFFS!
BUT THAT'S DANGEROUS! SHE MIGHT FALL OVER!


SHE DID FALL! RAN RIGHT OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF!
WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING, JIM! THOUGH SHE'S PROBABLY DEAD BY NOW! POOR OLD CREATURE!

YOU WERE RIGHT, JANE! MUST BE SOME POOR INSANE WOMAN THAT HAS BEEN LIVING IN THIS OLD HOUSE!
AND WE— WE DROVE HER OUT TO HER DEATH!

BUT...
SHE'S ALIVE! DOWN THERE ON THE BEACH!
YES! MUST HAVE USED THESE OLD STAIRS! UGH— THEY LOOK ROTTEN ENOUGH. BUT LET'S GET BACK TO THE HOUSE.

THE NEXT AFTERNOON...
THOSE ROCKS ARE CALLED THE WEIRD WOMEN! THE BARTLEYS, WHO BUILT THE MANOR, USED TO HANG LANTERNS ON THE ROCKS TO LURE SHIPS! THEY WRECKED SCORES OF SHIPS BEFORE THEY WERE CAUGHT AND HANGED!
LOOK AT THAT OLD HULK OUT THERE! MUST BE—UGH—ONE OF THE SHIPS!
UNDOUBTEDLY! THIS PLACE IS A GOLD MINE, JANE! MY NOVEL WILL BE THE MOST AUTHENTIC WORK ON THE WRECKERS THAT EVER...
JIM! LOOK! THE OLD WRECK!
HO-HO-HO-HAH-HAH-HE-EEE—
GAD! IT'S THAT CRAZY OLD WOMAN AGAIN!
AND SHE'S ON THAT WRECK, JIM! SHE MUST LIVE OUT THERE!
COME, MY DEARS! I KNOW YE WANT TO! COME AND VISIT OLD BESS ON HER SHIP! HAH-HAH-HEE-HEE-OLD BESS REMEMBERS! OLD BESS WAS THE ONLY ONE AS WASN'T DROWNED! COME!
JIM RANSOME FEELS A STRANGE COMPULSION TO TALK TO THE OLD HAG...
I MUST TALK TO HER, JANE! I SIMPLY MUST! THERE'S SOMETHING VERY ODD ABOUT ALL THIS — MAYBE SHE KNOWS SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP ME!
I WON'T STAY HERE ALONE! OH — BE CAREFUL OF THOSE STAIRS!
THEY REACH THE BEACH SAFELY AND...
SHE'S COMING TO MEET US, JIM!
MAYBE SHE'S NOT AS CRAZY AS I THOUGHT! I HOPE SHE CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS INTELLIGENTLY!

WITHOUT WARNING THE SKY DARKENS, AND A STORM BURSTS IN FURY...
H—HOW CAN A STORM COME UP SO QUICKLY, JIM?
STRANGE! BUT WE'LL RUN FOR IT AS SOON AS I HAVE A WORD WITH THIS OLD WOMAN!
HAH—HAH— A LOVELY STORM, MY DEARS! JUST LIKE THE ONE ON THAT NIGHT! THE NIGHT THEY WRECKED US! A TERRIBLE STORM IT WAS...
STRANGE EXCITEMENT MOVES IN THE MIND OF JIM RANSOME! AS A WRITER, HE SENSES A FANTASTIC STORY...
OLD WOMAN! BESS! DO YOU MEAN YOU WERE WRECKED ON THIS COAST?
AYE—THAT I WAS! ALL OF THEM DROWNED! ALL DEAD—BUT ME!
INCREDIBLE! THE LAST SHIP WAS WRECKED IN 1823! BUT...
SUDDENLY, JANE RANSOME SEES — WHAT?
JIM—LOOK BEHIND YOU! EEEEEEEE—
OH, JIM—JIM! WHAT ARE THEY?
THE D-DEAD, I'M AFRAID! COME BACK FROM THE SEA!
HAH-HAH— YER RIGHT, MY DEARS! ALL MY FRIENDS, DROWNED LONG AGO BY THOSE MURDERING WRECKERS! THEY HATE ANYONE WHO IS— ALIVE!
RUN FOR IT, JANE! RUN!
OHHH—
GET THEM, MY OLD FRIENDS! KILL THEM— MAKE THEM LIKE YOU! WHY SHOULD THEY LIVE?
HURRY— HURRY! THEY'LL TEAR US TO PIECES!
OHH—THE STAIRS SWAY SO! IF WE FALL...

AS THEY REACH THE TOP OF THE ROTTING STAIRS...
ONE CHANCE! IF I CAN—(GASP)—LOOSEN THESE OLD STAIRS THEY CAN'T GET TO US!
HURRY—HURRY! THEY'RE ALMOST TO THE TOP!
THERE! JUST IN TIME!
OH, THANK GOODNESS! THOSE HORRIBLE CREATURES!
A PITY I CAN NEVER WRITE THIS, BUT NOBODY WOULD BELIEVE IT! IMAGINE—THAT OLD CRONE WAS ACTUALLY WRECKED HERE IN 1823!
LET'S LEAVE THIS PLACE AT ONCE!
JANE RANSOME TURNS THEN—AND SCREAMS...
I—JIM! HELP! SHE'S HERE...
HA—HAH—HAH—HAH—YOU WON'T ESCAPE OLD BESS!
HUH! WHA...
DIE—DIE! EVERYONE MUST BE DEAD BUT ME!
EEEEEEE—
JANE! MY—
YOU MURDERING OLD HAG! I'LL SEND YOU WHERE YOU—(SOB)—BELONG! YOU K-KILLED JANE!
HEE—HEE—WE'LL ALL DIE SOON! OHH—HAH—HAH!

A SLIP OF JIM RANSOME'S FOOT AND HE FOLLOWS HIS WIFE INTO THE ABYSS...
GAAAAAA—
HEE—HEE—WE'LL BOTH BE KILLED! HAH—HAH—HAH!
IT SEEMS TO JIM RANSOME THAT EONS PASS BEFORE HE RECOVERS HIS SENSES. STRANGELY ENOUGH, HE IS ALIVE—OR IS HE?
OHHH—MY HEAD! BUT NO BONES SEEM TO BE BROKEN! AND I CAN'T REMEMBER JUST WHAT HAPPENED, EXCEPT THAT THE OLD CRONE AND I WERE...
DESPERATELY, HE SEARCHES THE LONELY SANDS...
I REMEMBER NOW! JANE FELL! JANE! WHERE ARE YOU? JANE!
SUDDENLY, JIM HEARS A SOFT SOUND, A CRY, AND WHEN HE TURNS...
JIM! HERE I AM! I'M GLAD YOU CAME TO ME! I WANTED YOU TO FOLLOW ME!
JANE! YOUR FACE! Y—YOU'RE LIKE THEM!
COME TO ME! WE ARE AS THEY ARE NOW! WE WILL LIVE TOGETHER IN THE SEA FOREVER!
NO! KEEP AWAY FROM ME! YOU'RE NOT JANE! YOU'RE SOME HORROR FROM THE PIT! STAY AWAY...
JAMES RANSOME STUMBLES, AND IN THE QUIET MIRROR OF THE SEA...
HUH! I—
AAHHHHHHHH—
The End

LEE TALBOT HAD A FORMULA THAT MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT HIM $1,000,000 -- BUT HE ALSO HAD---

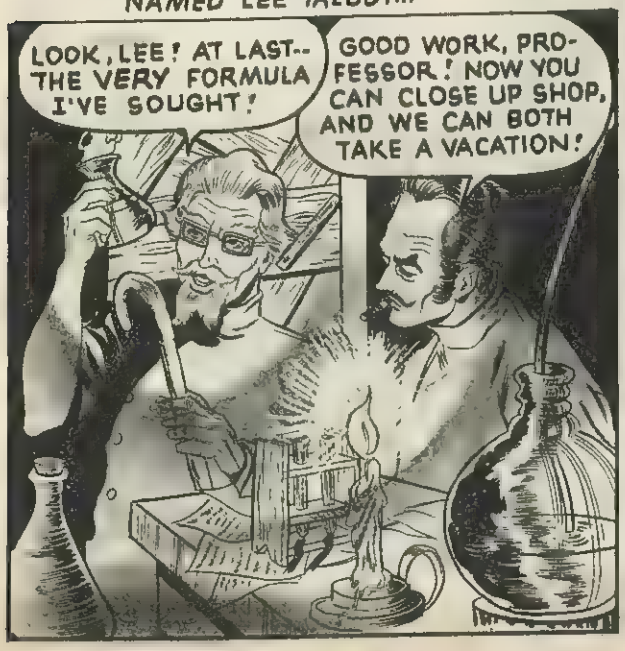
SKELETON in the Closet

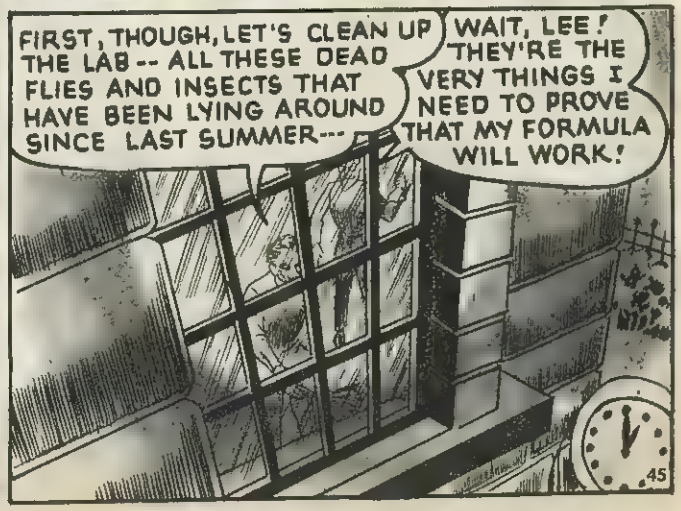
PRESS

MEMO FROM RALPH BAIRD... GHOST WRITER... YES, I WAS A WRITER WHO "GHOSTED" STORIES FOR OTHER PEOPLE... AND NOW I'M CONTINUING MY CAREER FROM THE BEYOND! HERE IS THE SPINE-TINGLING TALE OF A FELLOW GHOST, PROFESSOR SPARTACUS DUBROW---

IT WORKS! THE FORMULA IS PERFECT! THE SECRET OF VRIL IS MINE! PROF. DUBROW SHOULD BE HERE TO SEE THIS *IN THE FLESH!* HEHEHEHEHEH!

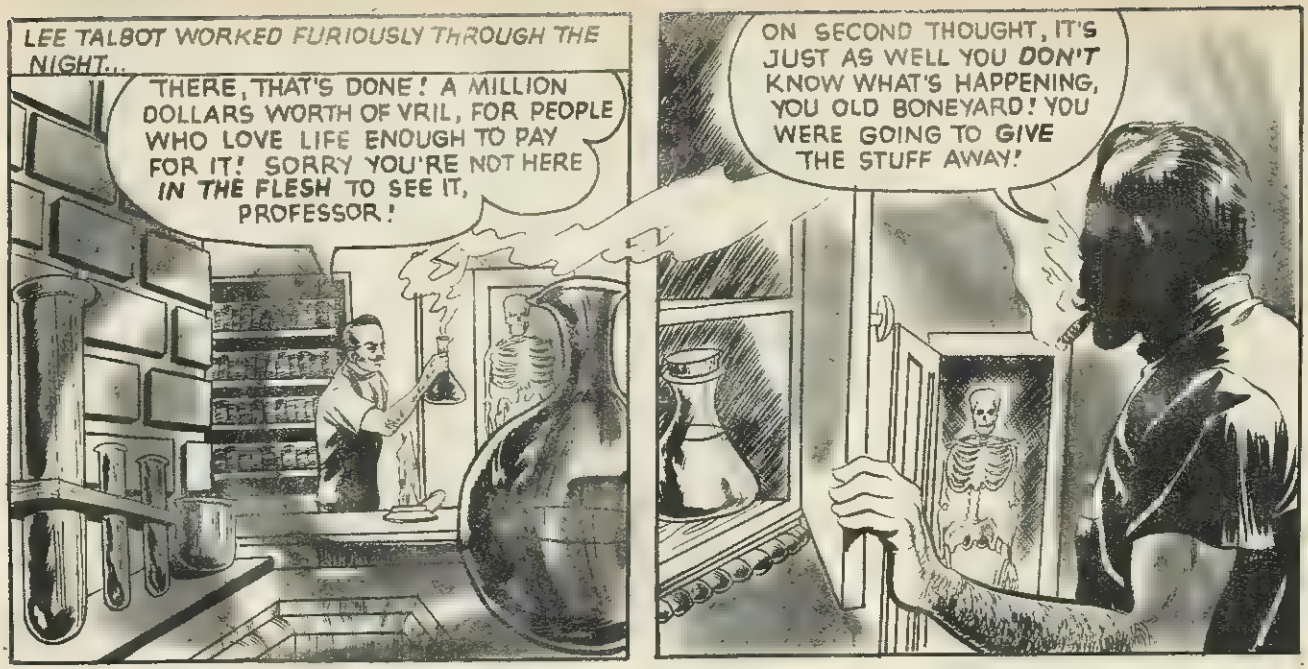
FOR YEARS, PROF. DUBROW HAD BEEN RUNNING THE VITREX RESEARCH FOUNDATION WITH ONLY ONE ASSISTANT, A TECHNICIAN NAMED LEE TALBOT...

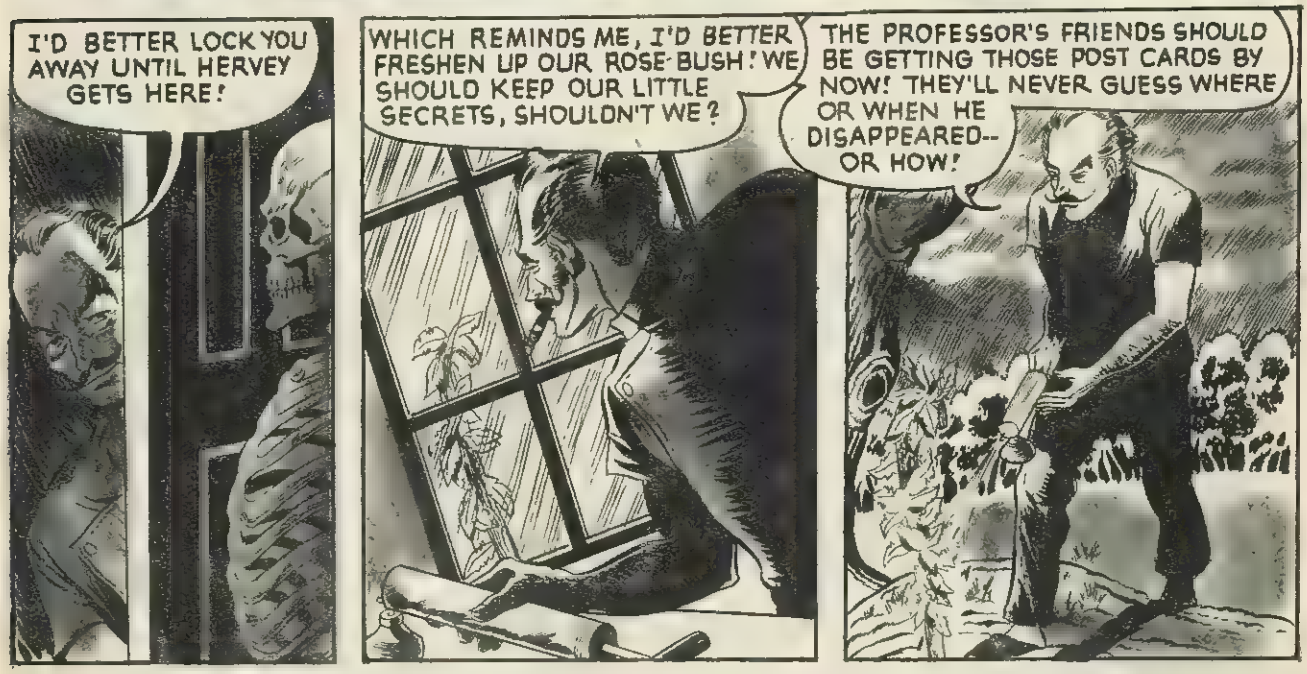


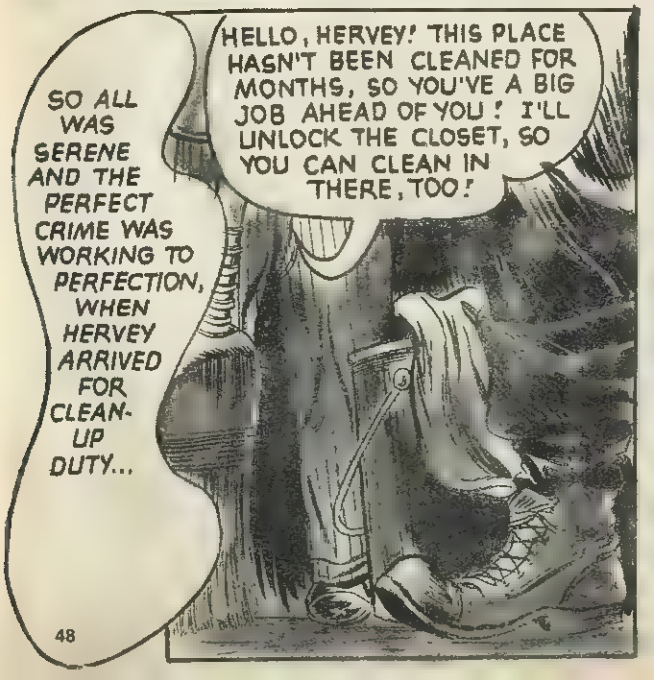


YOU THOUGHT I WAS WORKING ON A FORMULA THAT WOULD PROLONG LIFE FOR PERHAPS A FEW YEARS---
BUT INSTEAD, I WAS DEVELOPING AN ELIXIR TO RESTORE LIFE! WATCH!
THERE IS THE LIVING PROOF OF IT!
AS OLD PROF. DUBROW HOBBLED BACK TO HIS WORK BENCH, AN EVIL SCHEME FLASHED THROUGH LEE'S WARPED MIND...
AND WHEN DUBROW LAID HIS CANE ASIDE...
THERE'S A FORTUNE IN IT IF I CAN GET RID OF THE OLD MAN!
THESE NOTES CONTAIN MY FULL FORMULA -- THE GREATEST BOON EVER OFFERED TO MANKIND!
THAT ONE CLOUT REALLY FINISHED HIM! NOW I'LL DUMP THE BODY IN OUR CHEMICAL VAT---
--AND GIVE IT AN ACID TREATMENT! NOBODY WILL EVER RECOGNIZE OLD DUBROW AFTER THIS! HEH-HEH!

BY THE NEXT DAY, LEE TALBOT HAD GONE THROUGH ALL OF DUBROW'S EFFECTS...
SOME POST CARDS THE PROFESSOR ADDRESSED BUT NEVER MAILED, THE LAST TIME HE TOOK A VACATION! I'LL GO TO THOSE PLACES AND MAIL THE CARDS MYSELF! THAT WILL FOOL PEOPLE!
BUT FIRST I'D BETTER GATHER UP WHAT THE ACID LEFT OF PROF. DUBROW---
-- AND PUT IT IN THIS CLOSET THAT THE PROFESSOR ALWAYS KEPT LOCKED! I CAN SAY IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR YEARS -- WHICH IT HAS! HEH!
AS FOR THE CLUB I USED, I'LL STICK IT HERE IN THE YARD---
THEN POUR WHAT'S LEFT OF THE VRIL INTO THIS SPRAY GUN---
AND GIVE THE CANE A FULL-FLEDGED TREATMENT!
SO LEE TALBOT MADE A QUICK TRIP, MAILED THE POST CARDS, AND RETURNED...
OH-OH! THE BUSH IS DROOPY! LUCKY I STILL HAVE SOME VRIL IN THE SPRAY GUN!
WHAT'S THE TROUBLE, MR. TALBOT? ROSE BUGS?
THAT'S RIGHT, HERVEY! ROSE BUGS!
BY THE WAY, CAN YOU STOP AROUND TOMORROW AND CLEAN THE PLACE UP BEFORE PROF. DUBROW RETURNS?
SURE THING, MR. TALBOT!


LEE TALBOT WORKED FURIOUSLY THROUGH THE NIGHT...
THERE, THAT'S DONE! A MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF VRIL, FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE LIFE ENOUGH TO PAY FOR IT! SORRY YOU'RE NOT HERE IN THE FLESH TO SEE IT, PROFESSOR!
ON SECOND THOUGHT, IT'S JUST AS WELL YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, YOU OLD BONEYARD! YOU WERE GOING TO GIVE THE STUFF AWAY!


I'D BETTER LOCK YOU AWAY UNTIL HERVEY GETS HERE!
WHICH REMINDS ME, I'D BETTER FRESHEN UP OUR ROSE-BUSH! WE SHOULD KEEP OUR LITTLE SECRETS, SHOULDN'T WE?
THE PROFESSOR'S FRIENDS SHOULD BE GETTING THOSE POST CARDS BY NOW! THEY'LL NEVER GUESS WHERE OR WHEN HE DISAPPEARED-- OR HOW!


SO ALL WAS SERENE AND THE PERFECT CRIME WAS WORKING TO PERFECTION, WHEN HERVEY ARRIVED FOR CLEAN-UP DUTY...
HELLO, HERVEY! THIS PLACE HASN'T BEEN CLEANED FOR MONTHS, SO YOU'VE A BIG JOB AHEAD OF YOU! I'LL UNLOCK THE CLOSET, SO YOU CAN CLEAN IN THERE, TOO!

A--A SKELETON! YOWW!
DON'T LET IT SCARE YOU! PROF. DUBROW USED IT IN HIS EXPERIMENTS! SEE YOU LATER, HERVEY!

AS HERVEY STARTED WORK, A LONE BUTTERFLY BUZZED PAST HIS NOSE...
SO THE JANITOR GRABBED THE SPRAY GUN THAT WAS LYING HANDY...
BUT AS HE TRIED TO KILL THE BUTTERFLY, OTHER INSECTS CAME TO LIFE...
AND THE MORE HERVEY SPRAYED, THE THICKER THEY BECAME, UNTIL...
THEY'RE EVEN GETTING IN THE CLOSET! I'D BETTER CLEAN THEM OUT OF THERE--THAT'S FOR SURE!
HELLO, HERVEY--DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
THE--THE SKELETON--IT'S COME TO LIFE!
OF COURSE I'VE COME TO LIFE, HERVEY--THANKS TO YOU! I'M PROF. DUBROW! I WANT YOU TO HELP ME EVEN SCORES WITH THE MAN WHO MURDERED ME!
SURE--SURE THING, PROFESSOR!
IN THAT DRAWER, HERVEY, YOU WILL FIND A LOADED REVOLVER!
NOT IF I GET THERE FIRST, HE WON'T!
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK, HERVEY--JUST LIKE THE PROFESSOR WAS!
GRAB HIM, HERVEY, OR HE'LL KILL YOU!

CONTINUED ON THE BACK COVER

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GRADUALLY, BUT SURELY, LEE TALBOT SUCCUMBED TO THE GRIP OF THOSE BONY FINGERS...
THE VRIL-- IT'S ALL LEAKED AWAY-- BUT MY FORMULA IS HERE!
I' MUST MAKE MORE-- BEFORE MY TEMPORARY STRENGTH IS--IS--GONE---
BEFORE THE SKELETON HAND COULD ADD THE FINAL INGREDIENT, ITS STRENGTH GAVE OUT... AS HOURS PASSED, THE REMNANTS OF THE PRICELESS ELIXIR BOILED AWAY, WHILE THE BONES OF ITS INVENTOR LAY MOTIONLESS UPON THE FLOOR... DAYS FOLLOWED, AND FINALLY MEN CAME TO THE SILENT LABORATORY, TO FIND A STRANGE SCENE...
APPARENTLY HERVEY WAS CHOKING TALBOT TO DEATH WHEN LEE MANAGED TO SHOOT HIM! BUT IT WAS TOO LATE FOR LEE TO SAVE HIS OWN LIFE!
BUT WHY SHOULD THEY HAVE BEEN FIGHTING OVER A SKELETON?
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE-- BUT NEITHER DOES THIS BATCH OF PAPERS! MIGHT AS WELL TOSS THEM IN THE STOVE!
I WONDER WHERE PROF. DUBROW WENT-- AND WHY HE LEFT HIS CANE STUCK HERE IN THE GROUND?
IT BEATS ME, TOO!
LIKE THAT YARN... HMM? -- I KNOW WHERE PROF. DUBROW WENT... DO YOU? ... WE BOTH KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAB, THOUGH-- YOUR GHOST WRITER--THAT'S ME!-- GOT THE INSIDE STORY!
PRE
the End